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Venezuelans threaten Guyana oil platform

VENEZUELAN THREAT: In a highly charged moment for national security, President Dr. Irfaan Ali delivered a live statement on Saturday following reports that a Venezuelan vessel had approached Guyana's assets within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Sitting alongside Prime Minister Brigadier (retired) Mark Phillips and Chief of Defence Staff Brigadier Omar Khan, President Ali addressed the nation, detailing the events as they unfolded.

The vessel in question was identified as the Venezuelan Coast Guard patrol ship which was said to have operated near Guyana's offshore facilities, including the Prosperity FPSO. These assets, according to the President, are lawfully operating within Guyana's EEZ.

In his statement, President Ali clarified that the Venezuelan vessel had transmitted a radio message asserting that it was operating in what it claimed to be "disputed international waters" before continuing its south-westerly

course toward other FPSOs. The President firmly dismissed this claim, stating: "Let me be unequivocal. Maritime boundaries are recognised under international law, and this is a matter of grave concern."

Addressing the gravity of the situation, President Ali assured citizens that the government was responding with both responsibility and caution. "I assure you that my government is not acting precipitously; we are addressing this situation with seriousness and responsibility," he said.

The government's immediate response involved summoning the Venezuelan ambassador to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where strong protests were lodged against the incident.

The Venezuelan government denied Ali's allegations and claimed that the waters they entered were not part of Guyanese territory since it is a maritime zone pending delimitation in accordance with international law.

See full story inside



Ford threatens to cut power to USA

Newly re-elected Premier Doug Ford doubled down Monday on his threat to cut off electricity flowing from Ontario to several American states if the U.S. moves ahead with tariffs.

"If they want to try to annihilate Ontario, I will do anything, including cutting off their energy — with a smile on my face," Ford said during his first news conference since winning a third majority last week. Ontario is a major electricity exporter to New York, Michigan and Minnesota.

"They need to feel the pain. They want to come at us hard? We've got to go back twice as hard," Ford continued.

The comments came on the eve of U.S. President Donald Trump's 25 per cent tariffs on Canadian goods, and 10 per cent on energy.

The import levies could potentially devastate several key Ontario industries like auto manufacturing and steel production, as well as drive up retail prices and fuel more inflation.

Ford added his government is also prepared to implement a surcharge on every megawatt of energy states purchase from Ontario and "rip up" a \$100-million deal with Elon Musk's Starlink internet company. The LCBO has already been directed

to remove all American booze from its shelves since the tariffs came into effect Tuesday.

He similarly urged consumers, retailers and municipalities to source goods from Ontario, and from elsewhere in Canada if they can't be found in the province.

Ford said he is "asking politely" before he implements legislation that could require retailers to highlight Canadian-made products on their shelves.

"So please, please work with us, or we're going to legislate it. And start onshoring goods from — you're bringing (goods) around the world — there's nothing we can't build here in Ontario, absolutely nothing," he said.

Ford was mum on whether Ontario would apply any retaliatory tariffs at the provincial level, but repeated his previous support for the federal government to go "dollar for dollar" in its response.

Speaking on NBC's Meet the Press later in the day, Ford also said he would stockpile nickel.

"We'll respond strongly, and we don't want to," he said. "On the critical minerals, I will stop shipments going into the U.S. for nickel. It will shut down manufacturing."

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MASHRAMANI 2025 GEORGETOWN EXPLODES IN COLOUR, HUGE PUBLIC SUPPORT!

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The streets were alive! Mashramani 2025's huge public support made it a truly memorable celebration. Photo: John Greene



**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PRESIDENT APPLAUDS
GUYANA'S GROWTH**

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**100K CASH GRANT DISTRIBUTION UNDERWAY
ACROSS SEVERAL REGIONS**

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**GUYANA EYES NORTHERN BRAZIL; TRADE MISSION
SET FOR 2025 TO BOOST ECONOMIC TIES**

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2025 GUYANA ENERGY CONFERENCE AND SUPPLY CHAIN EXPO

A HUB OF MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR INVESTMENTS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION



President Ali addressing the opening of the 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo at the Guyana Marriott Hotel

The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo (GECSCCE) showcased Guyana's emergence as a dynamic center for energy, agriculture, and sustainable development, attracting multimillion-dollar investments and forging strategic regional partnerships.

The conference highlighted

HUB
President Irfaan Ali announced a major



Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd), Mark Phillips

investment from a US-based company in Guyana's oil and gas sector. The company plans to process 30,000 barrels of oil per day by the end of 2025, meeting domestic demand and supplying neighbouring Brazil and the wider region.

President Ali described the project,

network, stimulating growth in maritime, transport, and logistics sectors. The government is also exploring a



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

separate 30,000-barrel oil refinery in Berbice to further enhance value-added processing and export capacity.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC STRENGTHENS ENERGY TIES WITH GUYANA

Dominican Republic's President Luis Abinader announced his country will finalise petroleum exploration agreements with Guyana, deepening economic collaboration following a 2023 Memorandum of Understanding.

President Abinader

President Abinader also underscored a shared vision for industrialisation, innovation, and economic sovereignty, noting that both countries are exploring joint agricultural projects to enhance food security in the region. "The Dominican Republic will always stand as an ally and as a friend," he affirmed.

VP JAGDEO REASSURES OIL MARKET REMAINS

emphasised that global demand for fossil fuels would remain strong,



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

RESILIENT

Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo addressed concerns about potential oil market saturation, reassuring attendees that Guyana's oil sector

driven by Guyana's low break-even costs and high-quality oil. He reaffirmed that Guyana's stable production capacity and strategic position ensure the country's attractiveness as a leading investment destination.

AFREXIMBANK ANNOUNCES US\$1 BILLION FACILITY FOR LOCAL OIL SERVICES

In another major development, Professor Benedict O. Oramah, President

GUYANA'S COMMITMENT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CARBON CREDIT SALES

A key component of Guyana's sustainable growth strategy was highlighted at the conference with Dr. Jagdeo announcing that revenue from carbon credit sales will fund 1,700 social and economic projects in indigenous communities over the next two years. These projects aim to empower local



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

of Afreximbank, unveiled a US\$1 billion financing facility aimed at supporting Guyanese businesses in the oil services

populations while preserving Guyana's status as one of the world's largest carbon

CON'T ON PAGE 23



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

groundbreaking projects poised to reshape the nation's energy sector and drive broader economic growth throughout the region.

US COMPANY TO INVEST IN GUYANA'S OIL, CREATING REGIONAL FUEL

expected to draw at least US\$300 million in investment over the next two years, as "transformative", creating thousands of jobs and solidifying Guyana's role in the global oil and gas supply chain.

The development includes storage facilities and a regional fuel supply



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

expressed his country's desire to emulate Guyana's oil and gas success. He highlighted joint projects such as a feasibility study for a petrochemical fertilizer plant and discussions surrounding the establishment of an oil refinery. The Dominican Republic will also train Guyanese technicians through its Technical and Vocational Training programme, reinforcing bilateral ties.

remains resilient despite increasing global competition. He pointed to continued investments from global giants like ExxonMobil, which has submitted proposals for two additional projects in Guyana, as evidence of the nation's long-term oil prospects.

"I am not worried about the new environment or the US' position on the oil and gas industry," he stated. Dr Jagdeo

PRESIDENT ALI CHAMPIONS CARBON CREDITS, TRADE AT CARICOM SUMMIT



President Ali, along with other regional leaders, participating in the closing press conference at the 48th Regular Meeting of Heads of Government of CARICOM

President Irfaan Ali held high-level bilateral talks with European and Saudi Arabian leaders during the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, held in Barbados from February 19-21. The discussions focused on strengthening partnerships and advancing cooperation in key areas such as carbon credits, trade, education, and regional

development. President Ali showcased Guyana's innovative carbon credit model to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, inviting her to be a keynote speaker at the upcoming Global Biodiversity Summit in Guyana. Von der Leyen commended Guyana's environmental leadership and reiterated the EU's commitment to expanding trade

relations, particularly through the Global Gateway initiative.

In a separate meeting with Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, President Ali discussed deepening bilateral ties. Minister Al-Jubeir announced an upcoming visit from the CEO of the Saudi Development Fund to explore investment opportunities in Guyana and highlighted potential collaboration in education, including scholarships for Guyanese students.

These bilateral engagements underscore Guyana's growing international profile and its strategic partnerships with both the EU and Saudi Arabia.

The CARICOM summit itself addressed

critical regional issues, including the free movement of people, trade barriers, regional transportation, food and energy security, and upcoming elections. President Ali emphasised the urgency



President Ali attending of the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting

of resolving longstanding challenges, particularly the "slothfulness" in removing trade barriers that hinder regional businesses. He also stressed the importance of advancing the free

movement of people within CARICOM.

Regional transportation improvements were a key topic, with President Ali noting progress on a private sector proposal to enhance connectivity.

CARICOM nations holding elections this year, President Ali highlighted the organisation's crucial role in safeguarding democracy. Discussions on Haiti focused on supporting its transition to elections and strengthening international partnerships for stability. Energy security and regional integration were also central themes, with Guyana actively involved in developing an integrated energy plan with other CARICOM members.

The summit, themed "Strength in Unity: Forging Caribbean Resilience, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development", aimed to bolster regional cooperation and drive economic growth.

He reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to the regional agenda, acknowledging setbacks to food production targets due to recent natural disasters.

With several

CARICOM LEADERS SIGN GROUNDBREAKING MOUS

President Dr. Irfaan Ali oversaw the signing of two significant Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on the sidelines of the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM in Barbados.

The event, held at the prestigious summit, was attended by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Barbados's Prime Minister and current CARICOM chair, Mia Mottley, and Prime Minister of Grenada, Dickon Mitchell.



The first MoU, signed by Guyana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hugh Todd

signed by Guyana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hugh Todd, on behalf of the Government of Guyana. The agreement secures

technical assistance from the Government of Lithuania to Guyana and Barbados, aimed at strengthening pharmaceutical regulatory services within the region. This partnership sets the stage for future vaccine manufacturing in the Caribbean, an important step towards regional self-sufficiency in health and pharmaceutical sectors.

The second MoU centres on the exploration of digital telecommunication services for the

Caribbean. This agreement was forged between the Spanish company HISPASAT and the CARICOM Telecommunications Union, marking a new phase in regional digital connectivity and technological advancement.

During the signing ceremony, President Ali, President von der Leyen, Prime Minister Mottley, and Prime Minister Mitchell emphasised the significance of these agreements in advancing regional cooperation. They underscored



President Ali oversaw the execution of two significant Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on the sidelines of the meeting

the importance of strengthening pharmaceutical services and expanding digital infrastructure, both of which are key drivers of development and economic growth for the Caribbean.

These agreements

reflect the commitment of Caribbean nations and their international partners to foster collaboration in critical sectors, ensuring a more resilient and interconnected region for the future.



President Ali addressing a closing press conference on the final day of the 48th CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in Barbados

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has been selected as the new chairman of the CARICOM sub-committee on cricket, taking over from outgoing chairman, Dr. Keith Rowley. The announcement was

made by Dr. Rowley, on the final day of the 48th CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in Barbados.

Dr. Rowley, who is concluding his tenure as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago,

PRESIDENT ALI IS NEW CHAIRMAN OF CARICOM SUB-COMMITTEE ON CRICKET

stated that meeting would be his last at CARICOM. He formally passed the baton to President Ali, highlighting his colleague's strong background in cricket. "My colleague from Guyana, who is an eminent cricketer, as you know, President Dr. Irfaan Ali, will now take the chairmanship of the sub-committee on cricket," Dr. Rowley remarked.

Dr. Rowley emphasised the

importance of continuing to support West Indies cricket, acknowledging its international significance and the need to preserve its legacy. "We maintain our interest in the potential for West Indies cricket to remain at a high level internationally, and the heads of government should continue to be interested in what goes on in West Indies cricket and assist wherever we

can," he added.

The issue of West Indies cricket was briefly discussed during the three-day CARICOM meeting, though Dr. Rowley noted that significant progress had already been made following recent talks held in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. "In recent times, we have not been having heads of government meetings without having a component from West Indies cricket," Dr. Rowley

explained. "We did have some discussion, but not too much detail, because we've already done some work in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, and we've seen results and progress."

The appointment of President Ali marks a new chapter in the leadership of the CARICOM sub-committee on cricket, as he steps into the role of guiding efforts to strengthen the sport within the region.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PRESIDENT APPLAUDS GUYANA'S GROWTH

Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader praised President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's visionary leadership, highlighting his role in driving Guyana's exceptional economic growth at the 4th edition of the Guyana Energy Conference & Supply Chain Expo.

In his keynote address, President Abinader lauded Guyana's remarkable development over the last four years, emphasising that this trajectory would continue, further transforming not only Guyana but the entire

Caribbean and Latin America.

"Guyana is fortunate to have a visionary and dynamic leader in President Irfaan Ali. His path for development is the right one, and it will bring integral progress to Guyana and its people,"

President Abinader remarked, underscoring the alignment between both nations' development goals.

Abinader's remarks come amidst growing ties between the Dominican Republic and



Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader

Guyana, strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2023. The Dominican Republic is committed to finalising petroleum agreements

with Guyana, aimed at replicating its success in the energy sector. Additionally, Abinader revealed plans for enhanced workforce development, noting that the Dominican Institute for Technical and Vocational Training will work with Guyana to upskill technicians to support emerging industries.

The Dominican President further emphasised the shared vision between the two nations for industrialisation, innovation, and economic sovereignty.

"Our nation must not only supply raw materials, but also play a central role in the industry that manufactures high-value technological goods," Abinader said, calling for a deeper collaboration between the countries.

Moreover, President Abinader expressed unwavering support for Guyana's sovereignty, particularly in protecting its exclusive economic zones. **"Your commitment to democracy and social progress is clear, and the Dominican**

Republic stands with you," he declared. **"You have the full backing of the Dominican people, the Americas, and the international community. The Dominican Republic will always be a steadfast ally and friend to Guyana."**

The exchange underscored the deepening partnership between Guyana and the Dominican Republic, highlighting a shared commitment to mutual growth, innovation, and support for each nation's sovereignty on the global stage.

40% GROWTH AND COUNTING GUYANA'S ECONOMY BECKONS INVESTORS

With a staggering 40% annual growth rate from 2021 to 2024, Guyana's economy is booming, and Senior Minister Dr. Ashni Singh is urging investors to take notice. Speaking at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, Minister Singh emphasised the country's remarkable economic performance and the vast array of opportunities it presents to both local and international investors.

"The Guyanese economy at the end of 2024 was five times as big as it was at the end of 2019," Dr. Singh declared, highlighting the dramatic increase in nominal GDP. He pointed to the surge from

approximately US\$5.2 billion in 2019 to nearly US\$25 billion in 2024, and the corresponding rise in per capita GDP from just over US\$6,500 to over US\$30,500. These impressive figures, he argued, demonstrate the dynamism and resilience of the Guyanese economy.

Looking ahead, projections indicate continued strong growth, averaging over 20% annually for the rest of the decade. This sustained expansion, driven by both the burgeoning oil sector and diversification efforts in other key areas, makes Guyana a particularly attractive destination for investment.

The government

is prioritising diversification and strengthening the non-oil sectors, with robust growth seen in agriculture, construction, and mining. Dr. Singh emphasised the government's commitment to infrastructure development, citing significant investments in roads, deep-water ports, and other large-scale projects aimed at improving connectivity, reducing inefficiencies, and creating new business opportunities.

He pointed to the Linden to Mabura Hill Road and the planned bridge across the Corentyne River linking Guyana and Suriname as concrete examples of

this commitment. Beyond infrastructure, the government is also focused on revolutionising the energy landscape through initiatives like the gas-to-energy project and climate-resilient ventures. Investments in human capital development, health, housing, and water are also prioritised.

Minister Singh stressed that Guyana's strategic geographic location and free trade agreements provide additional incentives for investors. The country's proximity to Brazil and Suriname, combined with its CARICOM membership, offers access to a large regional

market. Investors can also leverage Guyana's trade agreements with major partners to expand their global reach. **"It does not matter what you produce or what you supply,"** Dr. Singh stated. **"There is demand for whatever it is that you're producing or supplying in every single sector."**

Within the oil and gas sector, which is a significant contributor to the country's economic boom, Dr. Singh highlighted the local content legislation, which encourages joint ventures and partnerships with local companies and nationals. He concluded his address with a powerful call to



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service Dr. Ashni Singh

action: **"If there is anybody still asking why Guyana? Where else but Guyana would you hear such a fascinating and factual story unfolding?"** His message was clear: Guyana's 40% growth trajectory makes it an investment destination that cannot be ignored.



Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, High Commissioner of Guyana to India, presenting his credentials to the President of India in New Delhi

NEW GUYANESE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO INDIA, SEERAJ, MEETS PRESIDENT MURMU

His Excellency Dharamkumar Seeraj, Guyana's newly appointed High Commissioner to the Republic of India, officially presented his credentials to India's President, Smt. Drupadi Murmu, at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

During the formal event, High Commissioner Seeraj emphasised the strong and dynamic relationship between Guyana and India,

highlighting their shared heritage, values, and the deep people-to-people connections that bind the two nations. He noted that the bilateral ties have grown significantly in recent years, underscored by multiple high-level reciprocal visits, including those of Guyana's First Lady and Minister of Health.

Seeraj pointed out the broad spectrum of cooperation between the two countries, which spans sectors such as agriculture,

education, healthcare, infrastructure, defence, ICT, and climate action. He also expressed his gratitude to the Indian government and its people for their continued support in advancing Guyana's development.

In her remarks, President Murmu recognised the deep historical and cultural connections between India and Guyana and reaffirmed India's commitment to enhancing diplomatic

and economic cooperation. She also referenced the recent engagement of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Guyana as a framework for future collaboration between the two countries.

President Murmu extended her best wishes to High Commissioner Seeraj for a successful and fruitful tenure.

Seeraj's appointment as Guyana's High Commissioner to India marks a continued commitment to

deepening bilateral relations, strengthening economic cooperation, and fostering a greater strategic partnership between the two nations. He is the eighth High Commissioner of Guyana to India since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1966.

100K CASH GRANT DISTRIBUTION UNDERWAY ACROSS SEVERAL REGIONS



A recipient with their cash grant

Hundreds of thousands of Guyanese citizens have already received their \$100,000 cash grant cheques, marking significant progress in the government's distribution programme. While acknowledging some remaining logistical challenges, Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo emphasised the scale of the operation and the positive impact the grants are having on families.

Citizens collecting their cheques at the Mocha Community Centre expressed gratitude for the financial assistance. Christopher Samaroo described the grant as a "pretty good incentive" that

would ease household burdens, noting that the sum represents more than many people earn monthly. He plans to use the funds for professional development. Lashana Guliver, a single mother vowed to spend the money wisely. Urlina Ramjit called the grant a timely intervention for those in need, while senior citizen Patricia Williams shared her plans to use the money to renovate her home.

Dr. Jagdeo, at a recent press conference, confirmed that a substantial number of cheques have been printed and distributed across the country. "Hundreds

of thousands" have benefited, he stated. He acknowledged, however, that the distribution process has encountered some obstacles.



A recipient with their cash grant

One key challenge remains the verification of registrants. Dr Jagdeo explained that each registration undergoes

verification before a cheque is printed, which has sometimes led to discrepancies between registrations and available cheques. This has caused delays, particularly in larger communities where news of the distribution has led to a surge in people arriving at distribution



A recipient with their cash grant

points. Another issue involves inconsistencies in the documentation required for cheque collection. Dr Jagdeo cited instances where citizens who registered with passports were later told they needed ID cards. He attributed this to varying interpretations of the rules by staff and pledged to provide clearer guidelines. Despite these



A recipient with their cash grant

challenges, Dr Jagdeo reiterated the government's commitment to a smooth and efficient distribution process. He noted that with the budget now concluded, staff will have more time to focus on clearing backlogs and streamlining remaining efforts. He also addressed concerns about inconsistent service at some distribution points, emphasising the need for better coordination among staff.

Dr Jagdeo appealed to the public for cooperation, stressing that cheques will be available after verification and that large gatherings before cheque readiness only complicate matters. He also addressed misinformation circulating about cheque validity. The government clarified that the \$100,000 cash grant cheques are valid for six months from the date of issuance, dispelling rumors of a shorter validity period. It was emphasised that there is no need to rush to banks, as cheques can be deposited at ATMs. Citizens were urged to disregard any misinformation and follow official guidelines for a smooth and orderly process, reiterating the government's focus on getting grants to eligible citizens quickly and efficiently.



A recipient with their cash grant

VYBZ KARTEL TO LAUNCH GUYANESE ARTISTS, ANNOUNCES MAJOR COLLAB

Jamaican dancehall icon Vybez Kartel engaged with Guyanese artists in a landmark session at State House, offering mentorship, encouragement, and announcing plans for future collaborations. The event, hosted by President Dr. Irfaan Ali, provided a unique platform for local musicians to interact with the renowned artist, who was in Guyana for the launch of his Str8 Vybz Rum.

The gathering, which included a casual cooking



Vybz Kartel and President Dr. Irfaan Ali at State House

session featuring chicken curry, saw Kartel sharing insights on discipline, forgiveness, and the importance of fostering talent. He emphasised

the necessity of a positive mindset and focus for achieving success, drawing from his own experiences, including his time in prison.

"Stay focused on your goals and cultivate a positive mindset," Kartel advised the assembled artists. "The right attitude can shape your success."

A key highlight of the event was Kartel's announcement of a special showcase prior to his highly anticipated BADERATION concert on May 24, 2025. This

showcase will feature local singers, from which Kartel will select two artists – one male and one female – for future musical collaborations.

President Ali enthusiastically pledged the full support of the Guyanese government for this initiative, stating,

importance of promoting positive messages. Kartel urged artists to remain grounded and disciplined in a challenging world.

Alongside President Ali, the event was attended by Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Oneidge Walrond and Minister



A recipient with tVybz Kartel at State House



Vybz Kartel and President Dr. Irfaan Ali at State House

"The Government of Guyana will back it 100%."

The meeting also addressed crucial issues affecting young people, such as bullying, and the

of Finance Dr. Ashni Singh, who discussed the potential for collaboration and the role of the arts in driving tourism and economic growth.

The BADERATION concert, scheduled for May 24, will feature extended performances from local artists, each receiving at least an hour on stage.

Kartel's visit, beyond the rum launch, signals a significant investment in the Guyanese music scene, aiming to elevate local talent onto the global stage through collaboration and mentorship.



Vybz Kartel at State House

GUYANA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TAP INTO JOINT TOURISM POTENTIAL

Guyana and the Dominican Republic (DR) are embarking on a joint tourism initiative, aiming to capitalise on their combined attractions and proximity to boost visitor numbers. The partnership, spearheaded by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, will see the two nations market themselves as a single destination, offering a diverse Caribbean experience.

President Ali emphasised the potential of this collaboration following discussions with Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader. **“I was very pleased with our discussion with the president**

of the Dominican Republic, who made it very clear that he is ready to market jointly Guyana and DR as a common destination,” President Ali stated. He highlighted the strategic importance of such partnerships in developing Guyana’s growing tourism sector.

With direct flights already connecting the two countries, the initiative aims to streamline travel and offer tourists a seamless experience combining the unique offerings of both nations. Guyana’s rich biodiversity, including its pristine rainforests and eco-tourism opportunities,

will be showcased alongside the Dominican Republic’s renowned beaches and vibrant culture.

The partnership seeks to tap into the increasing demand for multi-destination travel, offering tourists a more comprehensive Caribbean vacation. By combining their marketing efforts, Guyana and the DR aim to reach a wider audience and attract more international visitors. President Ali stressed the importance of leveraging existing assets, such as Guyana’s natural beauty, and developing new attractions to entice tourists.

The initiative aligns



President Ali with Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader

with Guyana’s broader strategy to diversify its economy and promote sustainable tourism development. By partnering with a more established tourism

destination like the DR, Guyana hopes to accelerate its own tourism growth and establish itself as a key player in the regional tourism market.

The collaboration is expected to create new opportunities for local businesses and contribute to economic growth in both countries.

BRAZIL-GUYANA TRADE COULD GET BOOST FROM PROPOSED RAILWAY



Completed in 2009, the Takutu River Bridge is a bridge across the Takutu River, linking Lethem in Guyana to Bonfim in Brazil

A proposed railway linking Guyana’s coast to the town of Lethem and onward to Brazil has the

potential to significantly boost trade between the two nations, according to Public Works Minister

Juan Edghill.

Speaking at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, Minister Edghill highlighted the railway as a key infrastructure project that could revolutionise the movement of goods between Guyana and its southern neighbour.

The railway, currently under serious consideration by the Guyanese government, would offer a more efficient and cost-effective transportation solution compared to existing options. **“We are looking at an alignment that can**

move containers from the deepwater harbour, through our forests, through Lethem into Brazil,” Minister Edghill explained. He emphasised that railways are ideal for transporting large volumes of goods over long distances, making it a potentially transformative project for bilateral trade.

This initiative coincides with ongoing efforts to improve road connectivity, including the Linden to Lethem highway, which will connect Brazil to Guyana’s coast by road. While the highway

will improve overland transport, the railway offers the potential for even greater capacity and efficiency, particularly for bulk cargo.

The Guyanese government is also pursuing the development of a deepwater port, likely in the Berbice area, a project that would further enhance Guyana’s trade capabilities and complement the proposed railway.

Minister Edghill underscored the crucial role of infrastructure development in driving economic growth, noting that the railway, along

with new bridges, is essential for connecting communities and opening up new areas for development. He emphasised that the government is committed to modernising Guyana’s infrastructure to facilitate increased trade and investment, ultimately benefiting both Guyana and Brazil. The railway project, if realised, could represent a major step forward in strengthening the economic ties between the two South American nations.

GUYANESE BUSINESSES SHINE AT BARBADOS AGRO-FEST 2025



Guyanese entrepreneurs and businesses showcasing their products at the expo

Guyanese businesses made significant impact at the Barbados Agro-

Fest 2025, with 75 local entrepreneurs showcasing their diverse

range of products, including art, crafts, wicker furniture, vegetables, and agro-processed goods.

The event highlighted the innovative spirit and entrepreneurial talent of Guyanese participants.

The impressive representation of Guyanese businesses at the festival was supported by the Government of Guyana through the Guyana Office for Investment (GoInvest). President Dr. Irfaan Ali, who attended the opening

ceremony, expressed his strong support for the entrepreneurs and emphasised the importance of fostering international trade relationships and expanding the reach of local businesses.

Alongside President Ali were Mr. Hugh Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, CEO of GoInvest. The delegation engaged with exhibitors and discussed opportunities for greater collaboration in the



Guyanese entrepreneurs and businesses showcasing their products at the expo

agro-sector.

This showcase at Agro-Fest 2025 not only highlights Guyana’s rich agricultural and entrepreneurial sectors but also strengthens its ties with the regional

market, offering local businesses an excellent platform to expand their networks and explore new growth opportunities.

GUYANA EYES NORTHERN BRAZIL; TRADE MISSION SET FOR 2025 TO BOOST ECONOMIC TIES

In a move to unlock new economic opportunities, Guyana is setting its sights on Northern Brazil with a planned trade mission in March 2025. The initiative, dubbed "Guyana Eyes Northern Brazil", aims to strengthen trade and investment ties between the two nations, focusing on the states of Roraima and Amazonas.

This mission, scheduled for March

20-21, 2025, follows productive discussions between President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, where the latter expressed Brazil's interest in supporting Guyana's development through infrastructure projects.

Guyana Eyes Northern Brazil will see a delegation of government officials and private sector representatives

exploring opportunities in key sectors such as agro-processing, manufacturing, tourism, and food distribution. The focus is to establish stronger cross-border trade and build a regional food hub.

The delegation will engage with key stakeholders in Boa Vista and Manaus, including state governors, industry federations, and trade authorities, to foster stronger partnerships



President Ali and President Lula during a discussion

and identify potential investment avenues. This mission represents a significant step in enhancing Guyana's economic footprint in the region and solidifying its relationship with its neighbour.



GUYANA HOSTS KEY UN SECURITY COUNCIL RETREAT, REINFORCES CARIBBEAN-AFRICAN UNITY



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hugh Todd

Guyana has solidified its growing role in international affairs by hosting the annual Retreat of the African Member States Plus (A3 Plus) in the United Nations Security Council. The event, held at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre in Kingston, Georgetown, marked a significant step in strengthening collaboration between African and Caribbean

nations on the global stage.

The A3 Plus retreat serves as a vital platform for deepening cooperation within the Security Council and

diplomats participated in the event.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd, underscored Guyana's commitment to

accomplishments and called for continued efforts in the pursuit of global peace and stability.

"Our commitment to multilateralism must and should be unwavering. We must continue to commit to the UN Charter. That commitment brings respect, stability and predictability in not only how we operate at the level of the United Nations Security Council, but how we conduct our foreign policy in our capitals," Minister Todd stated. He further emphasised that Security Council actions should always be in the best interest of humanity.

The A3 Plus has

already made significant strides in addressing

critical global issues, notably acting as an authoritative voice on developments in Sudan and Libya. The retreat will facilitate further robust dialogues on peaceful and sustainable development, reinforcing the strong bond between

African and Caribbean nations within the UN framework.



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hugh Todd

amplifying Africa's voice in international decision-making. Prominent African Union representatives, UN Security Council members, and key

multilateralism and the UN Charter, emphasising the importance of the A3 Plus's role in bolstering the Security Council's capacity. He commended the group's



Permanent Observer of the African Union to the UN Fatima Kyari Mohamed and Permanent Representative of Guyana to the UN and Coordinator of the A3+ Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett

Guyana's hosting of this event underscores its commitment to fostering international cooperation and its growing influence in global security matters.

GUYANESE UNITY AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT SHIVARATRI CELEBRATION



Scene from the Maha Shivaratri celebration at the Cove and John Ashram

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali emphasised the importance of unity and religious harmony during the Maha Shivaratri celebrations at the Cove and John Ashram. Addressing a large gathering of

devotees, the President underscored the significance of the Hindu festival as a time for reflection, gratitude, and fostering a sense of collective strength within Guyana's diverse society.

In his address, President Ali called on the nation to appreciate the blessings of life and seize every opportunity to contribute positively to humanity. **"Have we spent any time today to acknowledge this blessing? To recognise that we are given not just another year of life but another year to**

correct our mistakes and do more for each other?" he asked, urging individuals to express gratitude and spread love.

The President also highlighted the importance of aligning actions with principles, particularly in relation to democracy, and warned against the self-destructive nature of dishonesty. He stressed that those who refuse to acknowledge their wrongdoings would ultimately be held accountable by a higher power.

Pointing to Guyana's religious and cultural

diversity as a source of strength, President Ali encouraged the public



Scene from the Maha Shivaratri celebration at the Cove and John Ashram

to use their differences to unite rather than divide. **"Our nation's rich cultural and religious fabric is a source of strength.**

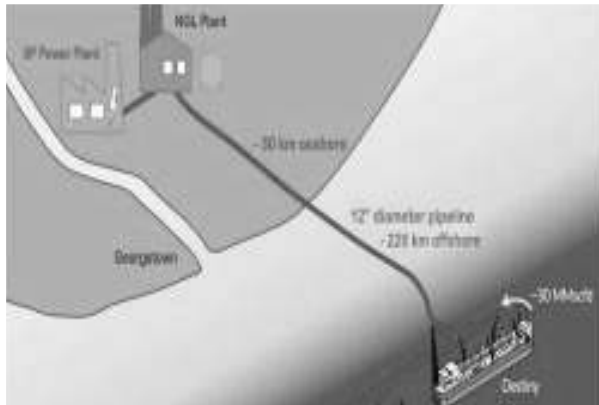
By upholding mutual respect and understanding, we

ensure that our diversity remains a unifying force rather than a cause for division," he declared. Attorney General

and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, who also attended the event, echoed the President's call for vigilance against those who attempt to sow division in the country. He reinforced the importance of maintaining unity and respect among all religious and cultural groups.

Maha Shivaratri, a sacred festival celebrated in honour of the deity Shiva, provided a powerful reminder of the importance of unity, integrity, and shared values in shaping the future of Guyana.

SIEMENS ENERGY SHORTLISTED TO OPERATE GUYANA'S GAS-TO-ENERGY POWER PLANT



The initial phase includes the construction of a pipeline, power plant, NGL facility, and upgrades to the power distribution network

Siemens Energy, a German company, has been shortlisted and is currently in negotiations to operate and manage the power plant component of Guyana's transformative gas-to-energy (GTE) project in Wales, Region Three. Winston Brassington, the GTE Project Lead, made the announcement at the Guyana Energy

Conference and Supply Chain Expo.

Following a request for proposals (RFP) process in 2024, three international companies – Siemens Energy, CH4 Systems (Puerto Rico), and Ethos Energy (Texas, USA) – expressed interest. Siemens Energy's proposal was deemed the “most technically compliant”, according

to Brassington, leading to the ongoing contract negotiations.

The government aims to finalise the agreement with Siemens Energy within the next few months. Concurrently, the selection process for subcontractors for the natural gas liquid (NGL) operations is underway. Brassington stated that both operating parties are expected to be in place by mid-year to ensure a smooth transition from construction to operations.

The GTE project has experienced some delays due to ongoing arbitration processes and equipment delivery challenges. A dispute between the government and the GTE contractor, Lindsayca/CH4, regarding payment for project commencement, is currently subject to



Winston Brassington, the GTE Project Lead

confidential arbitration. Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), stated that a decision on whether to proceed with full arbitration will be made shortly. While the financial implications of the delay are not yet determined, the government is working to minimise the impact.

Despite the delays, Guyana remains committed to the GTE project, envisioning itself as a major energy supplier in the Caribbean

and Latin America. Plans are already underway for a second GTE project. The first phase focuses on stabilising electricity costs and generating export revenue through NGLs, while phase two aims to attract increased private sector investment.

The initial phase includes the construction of a pipeline, power plant, NGL facility, and upgrades to the power distribution network. Upon completion, the project promises to slash energy costs by 50%, addressing Guyana's long-standing issue of high electricity prices. It will also significantly boost generating capacity to alleviate frequent power outages.

In addition to lower electricity costs, the government plans to sell cooking gas, fertilizer,

and other natural gas by-products to neighbouring countries. US-based CH4 Lindsayca is constructing the integrated facility in Wales for US\$759 million, while Kalpataru Projects International Limited is establishing the necessary transmission lines and substation. ExxonMobil Guyana has completed the pipeline that will transport natural gas from the offshore Stabroek Block's Liza oilfield to the Wales facility.

The project is further supported by a US\$527 million loan agreement with the US Export-Import (EXIM) Bank. President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali stated that this investment will generate savings of over US\$250 million for the country, boosting disposable income.

NEW DEMERARA RIVER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION ON TRACK FOR AUGUST 2025 OPENING

Construction of the highly anticipated new Demerara River Bridge has reached over 81 percent completion, according to the Ministry of Public Works. The project remains on schedule for its August 31, 2025 deadline.

Significant progress has been made across all aspects of the bridge's construction, including the east and west approach bridges, the cable-stayed main

bridge, and associated site infrastructure. Precast girder installation is underway, with over 24% completed on the eastern approach and 32% on the western side. Reinforcement

installation and pile foundation work for the remaining substructure are also progressing steadily.

Drilled shafts, crucial structural components, are now fully completed on the west bank and

nearing completion on the east. The main towers, designated P34 and P35, are more than 87% and 84% complete, respectively. Construction of the approach roadways is also advancing, with the 50-meter section of the eastern approach over 60% complete and the western approach at 46%.

The \$260.85 million project is being executed by China

Railway Construction Corporation Limited and supervised by Politecnica Ingegneria.

Upon completion, the new Demerara River Bridge is expected to significantly improve connectivity for thousands of commuters. The bridge promises to deliver cost and time savings, while also reducing waiting times for maritime traffic navigating the Demerara River. The



Construction ongoing on the bridge

improved transportation infrastructure is anticipated to boost economic activity and

enhance the overall efficiency of travel in the region.

Le Repentir cemetery in Georgetown is set to receive significant upgrades, transforming it into a national memorial, following the passage of a motion in the National Assembly. While the original motion, brought by an Opposition MP, called on the government to upgrade the historic facility, Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill clarified that the government had already initiated plans for cemetery upgrades nationwide, including Le Repentir, in 2025.

Minister Edghill reminded the Assembly that the Georgetown Mayor and City Council (M&CC) is legally responsible for the



Plans on stream for cemetery upgrades nationwide

cemetery's maintenance. He questioned the M&CC's use of funds collected from funeral homes and parlours for burial plots, citing the facility's continued degradation. He also pointed out that the MP

who brought the motion is a senior member of a political party that owes the M&CC \$6.4 billion in rates and taxes, suggesting that payment of these arrears would significantly improve the council's ability to

maintain the cemetery.

Despite the M&CC's responsibility, Minister Edghill outlined the government's urban rehabilitation programme, which includes several key improvements for Le Repentir. Small contractors from surrounding areas will soon be employed to construct concrete roads within the cemetery, including six main access roads, 13 cross streets, and four footpaths.

Addressing the challenge of overgrown vegetation, the

government is exploring a protocol allowing families to concrete not only the tomb itself but also the surrounding ground, effectively paving the space between tombs to minimise vegetation growth and reduce the need for constant maintenance. This solution is intended for all cemeteries nationwide.

Minister Edghill emphasised that the government's intervention was prompted by the M&CC's failures and inaction, noting that nearly \$20

billion has been spent to enhance Georgetown.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag refuted claims by Opposition MPs that the PPP/C owed over \$13 billion in rates and taxes, stating definitively that the government owes the City Council no money.

The motion, as amended, received support from Minister of Home Affairs, Robeson Benn, and Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr.

GUYANA DEMANDS REDRESS FROM VENEZUELA FOR BORDER ATTACK ON GDF RANKS



President Ali visiting the injured Guyana Defence Force soldiers

Ezra Samuel. During his hospital visit, President Ali received a medical update and spoke with the soldiers' families, expressing his gratitude and assuring them of the nation's unwavering support. **"You have courageous family members, and we are deeply thankful for their dedication,"** he stated.

The attack occurred in Guyanese waters between Eteringbang and Makapa, according to a GDF press release. Armed men positioned on the Venezuelan bank of the Cuyuni River opened fire on the GDF supply vessel. The patrol returned fire. Six soldiers were injured. A medical evacuation team transported them to Georgetown for

treatment. Preliminary investigations suggest the perpetrators are members of Venezuelan criminal gangs operating

Minister Todd conveyed Guyana's outrage and emphasised Venezuela's responsibility under international law for

criminal gangs operating in the border region, and preventing future attacks. Minister Todd expressed serious concern about the lack of denouncement and action from Venezuela, warning that **"inaction is complicity"**, and that Guyana would pursue all available options under international law to hold Venezuela accountable.

The timing of the attack is particularly sensitive, occurring on the 59th anniversary of the 1966 Geneva Agreement, which provides the framework for resolving the border controversy between the two nations. Guyana has called on Venezuela to embrace peace and respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.



President Ali visiting the injured Guyana Defence Force soldiers

along the border. In response to the attack, Foreign Minister Hugh Todd summoned Venezuelan Ambassador Carlos Perez to strongly condemn the act and demand redress.

any harm caused by individuals acting from its territory. He insisted that Venezuela fulfill its international obligations by preventing its territory from being used to harm Guyana, dismantling

41 GDF OFFICERS PROMOTED

The Guyana Defence Force (GDF) has announced the promotion of 41 officers, approved by President and Commander-in-Chief, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The promotions, in accordance with the Defence Act 15:01 of 1977, were announced by Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan. Leading the list

of promotions is Lieutenant-Colonel Lloyd Souvenir, Commandant of the Guyana National Reserve, who has been promoted to the rank of Colonel. This marks a historic moment as Colonel Souvenir becomes the first Colonel within the Guyana National Reserve. Several other officers also received

promotions. Acting Lieutenant Colonels Raymond Archer, John Mohanlall, and Jose Ferreira have been made substantive in their ranks. Nine Substantive Majors – Kevin Langevine, Crantson France, Jaime Castello, Marvin Simpson, Kevau Gray, Joslyn Assanah, Damon Joseph, Keith Watts, and Kirk Marlock – have been promoted

to the rank of Acting Lieutenant-Colonel. Captains Eon Cameron, Brentnol Bart, Michael Favourite, and Othniel Hope have been promoted to the rank of Acting Major, joining the Corps of Senior Officers. Nineteen Second Lieutenants have been promoted to Substantive Lieutenant. At the Coast Guard, Acting Commander



GDF officers promoted

Adrian Mc Lean has been promoted to Substantive Commander. Substantive Lieutenants Clinton Venture, Kenrick

Rodney, and Derrick Johnson have been promoted to the rank of Acting Lieutenant Commander.

Following an unprecedented attack on a Guyana Defence Force (GDF) patrol along the Cuyuni River, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali visited the six injured soldiers at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) and praised their courage. Simultaneously, the Guyanese government

summoned Venezuela's Ambassador to Guyana, demanding redress for the incident. President Ali expressed deep admiration for the soldiers' resilience and bravery after the attack on Monday, February 17. The injured soldiers are 2LT Ansel Murray, SGT Andre Frazer, SGT Kevon Davis, CPL

Kevin Henry, LCPL Troy Yorrick, and PTE Ezra Samuel. During his hospital visit, President Ali received a medical update and spoke with the soldiers' families, expressing his gratitude

and assuring them of the nation's unwavering support. **"You have courageous family members, and we are deeply thankful for their dedication,"** he stated.

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Preliminary investigations suggest the perpetrators are

members of Venezuelan criminal gangs operating along the border. In response to the attack, Foreign Minister Hugh Todd summoned Venezuelan Ambassador Carlos Perez to strongly condemn the act and demand redress.

Minister Todd conveyed Guyana's outrage and emphasised Venezuela's responsibility under international law for any harm caused by individuals acting from its territory. He insisted that Venezuela fulfill its international obligations by preventing its territory from being used to harm Guyana, dismantling criminal gangs operating in the border region, and preventing future

attacks. Minister Todd expressed serious concern about the lack of denouncement and action from Venezuela, warning that **"inaction is complicity"**, and that Guyana would pursue all available options under international law to hold Venezuela accountable.

The timing of the attack is particularly sensitive, occurring on the 59th anniversary of the 1966 Geneva Agreement, which provides the framework for resolving the border controversy between the two nations. Guyana has called on Venezuela to embrace peace and respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.



Dr Ashni Singh addressing the launch of the new Invoice Financing solution by the Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry

REGIONAL LEADERS DENOUNCE VENEZUELAN AGGRESSION AGAINST GUYANA

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has issued a strong condemnation of Venezuela's recent actions regarding the Essequibo region of Guyana, reaffirming its unwavering support for Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In a communique released following the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, CARICOM leaders expressed "grave concern" over Venezuela's stated intention to hold

elections in the Essequibo region on April 27, 2025. These elections, aimed at establishing a "Governor" and "Legislative Council" for the self-proclaimed "Guayana Esequiba State," were deemed illegal by CARICOM, contradicting international law, the UN Charter, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) order of December 1, 2023, and the Argyle Declaration.

"Heads of Government underscored that the convening of any



Caribbean leaders at a recent Heads of Government meeting in Barbados

such elections in Guyana's territory would be contrary to general principles of international law," the communique stated. CARICOM leaders urged Venezuela to

refrain from holding these elections and to cease any intrusions into Guyana's sovereign territory.

Adding to their concerns, CARICOM condemned the February

17, 2025, attack on Guyana Defence Force (GDF) personnel by an armed group from Venezuela along the border.

Despite these tensions, CARICOM

acknowledged Venezuela's submission of its counter-memorial to the ICJ on April 8, 2024, regarding the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award, and Guyana's subsequent reply on December 9, 2024. They encouraged Venezuela to continue its participation in the ICJ process by submitting its Rejoinder on August 8, 2025, as scheduled by the court.

CARICOM reiterated its "unequivocal and unwavering support" for Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity, emphasising the ICJ as the appropriate forum for a peaceful and legal resolution to the long-standing controversy.

FOREIGN BANKS TO OPEN REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES IN GUYANA WILL PAVE WAY FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT AND CREDIT ACCESS

Guyana's financial sector is poised for a significant expansion following the National Assembly's approval of the Financial Institutions (Amendment) Bill 2024. This legislation will allow foreign financial institutions to establish representative offices in the country, a move designed to stimulate economic growth, improve access to credit, and modernise the financial landscape.

Senior Minister of Finance Dr. Ashni Singh piloted the bill, emphasising its importance in strengthening the legal and regulatory framework. He explained that these representative offices will bring valuable international experience and cutting-edge technology to Guyana, showcasing a wider range of financial



Senior Minister of Finance Dr. Ashni Singh piloted the bill

products and services. These offices serve as an initial step, allowing foreign institutions to explore the Guyanese market and identify potential investment opportunities.

"It is a first step to the establishment of a full presence. It allows them to acquaint themselves with the Guyanese economic landscape in a more direct manner. It allows them to

potentially identify opportunities for doing business in Guyana and explore those opportunities," Minister Singh explained.

Dr. Singh also reassured that robust regulatory oversight will remain in place, requiring Central Bank approval for establishing a presence and a full-service licence for full operations.

The Minister underscored the crucial role of a strong financial system in driving economic growth. He stated that the new legislation will facilitate increased investment in key sectors, contributing to capital accumulation and overall economic efficiency. He also revealed that several major international financial institutions have already expressed

strong interest in establishing a presence in Guyana.

Dr. Singh contrasted the current government's approach with that of the previous administration, emphasising the commitment to working with stakeholders to support business development and create an enabling environment for growth. He highlighted the PPP/C's ongoing work to build a robust legal architecture for the financial sector, citing similar legislation in other jurisdictions.

The influx of foreign banks is anticipated to increase competition, potentially leading to more favorable interest rates and a wider array of innovative financial products. This is a key component of the government's plan to empower citizens and enable them to fully

participate in Guyana's rapidly transforming economy.

The government believes that a more dynamic and competitive financial sector will be vital in supporting business growth and promoting individual and household economic empowerment.

Guyana's financial sector has already demonstrated significant growth. Key indicators include:

Commercial bank deposits surged by 88.5 percent to \$967 billion by the end of December 2024, compared to the end of 2020.

Total credit to the private sector grew by 73.4 percent to \$450 billion over the same period.

Real estate mortgage lending increased substantially, by 71.9 percent.

Non-performing loans (NPLs) decreased from 10.8 percent at the end of 2020 to 1.75 percent at the end of December 2024.

Dr. Singh emphasised that these positive trends underscore the resilience of Guyana's financial sector and its pivotal role in supporting the nation's economic transformation.

He reiterated President Ali's vision for a modern infrastructure built on digitisation, efficient transaction processing, public service efficiency, openness, transparency, and a rule-based system. These reforms, he added, reflect the government's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the new economy are shared by all Guyanese.

DEFENDANTS ABROAD CANNOT AVOID CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS THROUGH VIRTUAL HEARINGS - AG CLARIFIES

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, has made it clear that defendants who are outside the jurisdiction of Guyana cannot use virtual hearings as a means to avoid criminal proceedings.

Speaking on his weekly programme Issues in the News, AG

Nandlall emphasised that while virtual court hearings have become a permanent feature of the legal system, they are not applicable to defendants who are abroad.

Virtual hearings, introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, have proven to be a valuable tool in facilitating access to

justice, particularly for detainees who no longer need to be physically transported to court. With virtual courtrooms set up near prison facilities, detainees can appear remotely, ensuring the continuation of proceedings while reducing logistical costs. However, AG

Nandlall stressed that individuals who leave the country after facing charges cannot expect to participate in their case virtually, indefinitely. "This is not permissible in law," the Attorney General asserted, explaining that if a defendant is found guilty, the court would be unable to impose

a sentence or take the necessary legal action if the individual remains outside the jurisdiction.

In cases where an accused person flees the country or refuses to attend court, the law allows the court to proceed with the case in their absence, with a sentence potentially being imposed for their

failure to appear.

AG Nandlall appealed to the judiciary to limit virtual appearances to those who are within the jurisdiction of Guyana, reinforcing the principle that the legal system cannot be used to facilitate the evasion of justice.

GUYANA'S BEST DAYS ARE AHEAD PRESIDENT ALI ON REPUBLIC ANNIVERSARY



President Ali addressing the audience during the 55th Republic Anniversary ceremony

“Guyana’s best days are ahead,” declared President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali as the nation celebrated its 55th Republic Anniversary on February 23. In a powerful address delivered on the lawns of Parliament Building on the eve of Republic, President Ali called for

years to come. President Ali urged all Guyanese to embrace the challenges facing the nation with a shared understanding that these challenges can be overcome through collective effort. **“This is the time when we must embrace the challenges with a common understanding that the challenges must make us stronger, build us stronger, bind us stronger, bring us stronger together, so that we must not only confront the challenges, but win, every day for every single citizen,”** he stated. He stressed that

made in the past four years, from robust economic growth and infrastructural advancements to improvements in governance and citizens’ quality of life. Guyana communities and the expansion of high-speed internet access to over 215 communities. He noted the establishment of more than 160 ICT hubs and digital skills training provided

Looking ahead to the General and Regional Elections later this year, President Ali pledged a free, fair, and transparent process, assuring the nation that the government will spare no resources to ensure a smooth and democratic exercise. **“Democracy will be celebrated this year,”** he affirmed.

He also paid tribute to the dedication and sacrifice of Guyana’s soldiers, reiterating the government’s unwavering commitment to protecting the nation’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

encouraged Guyanese to reflect on the nation’s achievements and blessings, expressing his belief that Guyana is poised for even greater things. He emphasised Guyana’s growing global leadership role, particularly as the host of the World Biodiversity Summit later this year. **“We must by now understand that our revenue and resources must set us on a path in which we can provide great global leadership,”** he concluded.

The President was joined by Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark



Scene from the 55th Republic Anniversary Flag Raising ceremony at Public Buildings in Georgetown

has experienced unprecedented economic growth since 2020, even while successfully managing inflation and increasing disposable income. This economic strength has enabled massive infrastructural development projects, including the Gas-to-Energy project at Wales, the New Demerara River Bridge, and the Mandela to Diamond Road Link, all of which are transforming the nation’s landscape.

The President also showcased advancements in energy and technology, such as the installation of 30,000 solar home systems in remote to approximately 20,000 citizens. He also highlighted significant investments in healthcare and education, including training for over 3,000 health workers and the construction of new schools. President Ali reiterated the government’s commitment to strengthening systems, improving transparency and accountability, and investing in technology to support effective and responsible policing. He emphasised the importance of a secure and hospitable environment for all Guyanese.



Scene from the 55th Republic Anniversary Flag Raising ceremony at Public Buildings in Georgetown

“The government remains committed to ensuring that every inch of Guyana’s land and exclusive economic zone remains protected for future generations to come,” he declared.

President Ali

Phillips, Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Sonia Parag, military personnel, and other dignitaries at the Republic Anniversary celebration.



Scene from the 55th Republic Anniversary Flag Raising ceremony at Public Buildings in Georgetown

unity and collaboration, emphasising that the foundation laid by the government has paved the way for even greater achievements in the

this prosperity must extend beyond Guyana’s borders to benefit the wider Caribbean and Latin American regions. He highlighted the significant progress

GUYANESE DIASPORA CELEBRATES REPUBLIC ANNIVERSARY, REFLECTS ON UNITY AND PROGRESS



Consul General of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in New York, Ambassador Michael E. Brotherson

Guyanese nationals in New York celebrated the 55th anniversary of their republic at a reception held at St.

Gabriel’s Episcopal Church. Ambassador Michael E. Brotherson, Consul General of Guyana in New York, and Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, addressed the gathering, emphasising the nation’s progress and the importance of unity.

Ambassador Brotherson urged Guyanese, particularly those in the diaspora, to recognise the significant strides the country has made and consider their individual roles in fostering further development and national unity. **“Let us remember that a nation united in celebration stands**

resilient in times of adversity,” he stated, highlighting the shared history and aspirations that bind Guyanese together.

Guyana’s progress was further underscored by a patriotic video display in Times Square, running 24 hours a

day until March 1, showcasing the nation’s achievements to a global audience. Brotherson pointed to Guyana’s **“extraordinary”** economic trajectory, noting its position as one of the fastest-growing economies worldwide, driven largely by the oil



The reception to celebrate Guyana’s 55th Republic Anniversary in New York



The reception to celebrate Guyana’s 55th Republic Anniversary in New York

and gas sector. He emphasised the government’s strategic investments in diversifying the non-oil economy for sustainable growth. He also highlighted President Ali’s **“Vision 25 by 2025”** initiative,

aimed at bolstering regional food security through increased agricultural production and technological advancements.

France condemns Venezuela's incursion, demands respect for Guyana's sovereignty

FRANCE has condemned the March 1 incursion by a Venezuelan Coast Guard patrol ship into Guyana's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) near the Stabroek Block oil reservoir.

The European nation, in a statement, demanded that Venezuela respect Guyana's sovereignty and uphold international law.

"France demands that Venezuela respect Guyana's sovereignty, uphold international law, and comply with the December 1, 2023 ruling from the International Court of Justice, which prohibits any unilateral actions that could change the status quo off Essequibo's coast," the country said in a March 3 statement.

A Venezuelan military vessel's unauthorised entry into Guyana's waters last Saturday ignited condemnation of the Bolivarian Republic's blatant disregard for international law.

In a live address to the nation, President Dr. Irfaan Ali, flanked by his Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips and Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan, warned that while Guyana continues to pursue the diplomatic route for a peaceful resolution to Venezuela's aggression, he will "not allow Maduro



The Venezuelan vessel that threatened a Guyanese FPSO in the Stabroek Block on March 1

and Venezuela to threaten or violate our sovereignty and territorial integrity".

The vessel was identified as the Venezuelan Coast Guard patrol ship operating near Guyana's offshore facilities, including the Prosperity FPSO. These assets, according to the President, are lawfully operating within Guyana's EEZ.

Those on board the Venezuelan vessel contacted one of the captains of an

FPSO and asked him several probing questions, such as the IMO number for the FPSO and how many persons were on board.

While the captain gave basic information such as his IMO number, he rejected and refused to answer the intrusive questions.

The Venezuelan personnel then falsely claimed that the FPSO was oper-

ating in what it claimed to be "disputed international waters" before continuing its south-westerly course towards other FPSOs.

Several international bodies and nations have since condemned the Nicolás Maduro regime for its continued aggression and provocation of the ongoing border controversy.



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The World Guyanese Congress (WGC) is a federally incorporated non-partisan global organisation that represents the interests of citizens of Guyanese heritage around the world. The organisation focuses on the successful development of our communities globally with an emphasis on leadership development and collaborative activities in diaspora communities to strengthen the community worldwide.

The organisation is headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and led by a Chairman and Executive Committee supported by an Advisory Council and various Committees as well as a Board of Governors that acts as ambassadors for the organisation. It has nine national and regional chapters:

Key priorities of the WGC include:

-  Build a globally cohesive community with a focus on youth and women in business and civic leadership worldwide.
-  Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
-  Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

World Guyanese Congress
5200 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2N 5P6



To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
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MASHRA GEORGETOWN EXPLODES IN

Georgetown erupted in a kaleidoscope of colour and joy as Guyana celebrated Mashramani 2025.

Thousands lined the streets to witness the dazzling display of costumes, floats, and cultural performances.

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali joined the festivities, praising the creativity and unity on display. The vibrant celebration showcased the best of Guyana, reflecting the nation's rich cultural heritage and its bright future.



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129 each



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Sunday 9 am to 6 pm

Store Hours
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Saturday 8 am to 9 pm
Sunday 9 am to 7 pm

PEGASUS COMPOUND TO WELCOME 13-STOREY FIVE-STAR HOTEL, CONSTRUCTION BEGINS IN MARCH

President Irfaan Ali, alongside Robert Badal, the owner of the Pegasus Hotel and Corporate Suites, and his wife, officially broke ground for a new 13-storey, internationally branded five-star hotel at the Pegasus compound in Georgetown. The event marks an exciting milestone for the country's hospitality sector.

The new hotel, expected to feature 150 luxury rooms, will offer

world-class amenities, including a state-of-the-art gym, a 13-floor executive lounge, a sky-view penthouse, and additional facilities designed to cater to both business and leisure travellers. With construction slated to begin in March, the development is poised to enhance Guyana's tourism infrastructure.

The expansion of the Pegasus compound will contribute not only to the growth of the tourism

sector but also to the creation of jobs and the overall development of the economy.

The groundbreaking comes just a few years after Badal's successful launch of the Pegasus Hotel and Corporate Suites in 2022, a venture that has already helped establish the Pegasus compound as a hub for luxury accommodations in the heart of Georgetown.

The new 13-storey hotel is set to be a key



The break grounding for a new 13-storey internationally branded five-star hotel in the Pegasus compound

player in Guyana's growing tourism industry, attracting high-end visitors and contributing to the continued development of Georgetown's skyline. Construction is anticipated to be completed in the near future, making the five-star hotel a new landmark in the country's hospitality scene.

GUYANA'S TOURISM CAPACITY BOOSTED 241- ROOM HOTEL OPENS

The Royal International Hotel officially opened its doors, adding 241 rooms to Guyana's hotel inventory and creating 50 jobs, primarily for Guyanese citizens. The new hotel is expected to further solidify Guyana's position as a leading destination for both business and leisure travellers.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond presided over the opening ceremony, emphasising the government's commitment to expanding the country's room stock. Minister Walrond explained that increasing capacity is



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips officially opening the hotel with Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond

crucial for attracting major international events and conferences, which in turn drive visitor arrivals. She projected that Guyana's visitor arrivals will

exceed 400,000 in 2025. "The presence of hotels such as this creates greater opportunities for complementary services, including

transportation providers, tour operators, and local artisans, all of whom stand to benefit from the spending power of international guests," Minister Walrond stated. She described the investment as a strong vote of confidence in Guyana's tourism sector and the government's economic policies. "Each of these establishments is instrumental in shaping an integrated tourism ecosystem that is essential for the long-term success of our industry," she added.

Minister Walrond urged the hotel's

management to maintain the highest hospitality standards, reminding them that the facility represents the "Destination Guyana" brand. She stressed the importance of providing excellent experiences for visitors. She also encouraged collaboration with local tour operators to create pre-booked packages for guests and challenged the hotel to showcase local culture, art, and cuisine in its offerings.

Citing a recent study, Minister Walrond highlighted the success of local tour operators, noting that they facilitated over 6,000 tours and

transported more than 14,000 people to various destinations within Guyana. She reaffirmed the government's commitment to partnering with the private sector to stimulate travel.

The Royal International Hotel and Mall, located near several Georgetown landmarks including the Botanical Gardens and the National Cultural Centre, offers a range of amenities, including a supermarket, gym, conference centre, gaming facility, and lounge. Its conference hall boasts a capacity of over 500 people.

PREMIUM PRODUCTS FOR GROWING GUYANA

As Guyana experiences rapid economic growth and development, the demand for premium products and services is also on the rise. This trend was highlighted at the recent launch of the Oppein showroom at Floor It Guyana's Oronoque and Forshaw Street location in Georgetown.

The event showcased how local businesses are stepping up to meet the evolving needs and aspirations of Guyanese consumers.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, emphasised that Guyana's growth must benefit all its citizens.

"As the country grows and develops, so too, we want our people to grow," she stated, underscoring the government's commitment to creating an investment-friendly climate that allows businesses to thrive and citizens to enjoy a higher quality of life. She noted

that the increasing wealth of the nation is driving demand for higher-quality products and services, from everyday goods to premium home furnishings. "We invest in their education, we invest in their healthcare, we invest in ensuring that there are business

opportunities for people to take advantage of," she explained, linking the government's investments in human capital to the growing consumer market.

Minister Rodrigues pointed out that the evolving tastes of Guyanese, encompassing everything from culinary experiences to high-end products, present significant opportunities for local entrepreneurs. "Guyana is ripe with opportunities for anyone who is ambitious and who dares to dream big," she asserted, encouraging businesses to seize these opportunities and cater to the growing demand for premium offerings. She commended Floor It's CEO, Andre Cummings, for his vision and encouraged other



The opening of the Oppein Showroom

local businesses to follow suit.

The Oppein showroom itself is a testament to this trend. CEO Cummings explained that Floor It Guyana's evolution was driven by a commitment to provide quality service and craftsmanship. The partnership with Oppein now allows them to offer premium products that transform living spaces and bring customers' visions to life. "Today

with the partnership with Oppein, we can safely say that you is allow you to transform your spaces, to capture all your experiences, and bring your vision to life," Cummings stated. The showroom represents a promise of professionalism and clear communication, reflecting the higher expectations of Guyanese consumers.



The openina of the Oppein Showroom

CUBA REMAINS AN INSPIRATION

By Donald Ramotar
former Guyana President

Very few countries, if any have been put under such great pressure as Cuba. Moreover, this attack on every aspect of life in Cuba is not just coming from any ordinary country, it is from the most powerful country in the world, the United States of America.

This sustained aggression began shortly after the Cuban people liberated themselves from one of the worst military dictatorships in the region in 1959. Shortly thereafter the Cuban people set themselves the task of building a new kind of society. They wanted to construct a society based on the needs of ordinary people, a more humane society.

Such a country would be different from others in the region where the rich and powerful local and foreign corporation controlled almost every aspect of life. Those countries are run not in the national interests but in the interest of the powerful rich at home and abroad.

The United States, the main imperialist power of today decided to destroy the Cuban Revolution, to kill its hope and crush its dreams. They used everything against the Cuban people.

This included direct military intervention, covert operations to assassinate its leader, Fidel Castro, sabotage of its economy by using chemical warfare including dengue fever, fever against livestock, etc. But the main measure was the economic blockade which they imposed some sixty-five years ago.

We in this region recall very well how they frightened travellers from flying with a Cuban airline. In 1976, a CIA supported operation bombed a Cubana Airlines out of the skies close to Barbados. Seventy-six persons perished in that terrorist act, including eleven Guyanese.

In the early period the Cuban government managed to frustrate the plans with the support of the Soviet Union and other socialist Eastern European states among those the German Democratic Republic.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 the pressure on the Cuban people has increased exponentially.

Yet the Cuban revolution managed to withstand the onslaught. Indeed, it did more than just survive, it has made great strides in some fundamental areas.

Cuba's health service is probably one of the best in the world. Every family in Cuba had a family doctor. It carries out some of the most complicated operation in treating cancer, heart diseases and other deadly diseases. It is one of the only developing country that produces much of the medicines it needs. During the recent Covid Pandemic it developed several vaccines on its own to treat its people. All without charging patients for the services.

Cuba's education level is one of the highest in the world. It has a 100% literacy rate and provide education at all levels free of charge.

It should be noted that despite the hardship imposed on that Caribbean Is-

land it has shown remarkable solidarity and support to peoples throughout the world. At times of great disasters throughout the world Cuban volunteers are either first or among the first to be on the scene. Recall the Ebola outbreak in the Congo; the Tsunami in Indonesia/Sri Lanka, etc. Cubans were on the front lines in the most dangerous areas.

The terrible earthquake in Haiti saw Cubans again taking the lead in saving lives.

Without Cuban specialists in medicines, education, etc many poor countries would experience great difficulties. Health service in the developing countries would surely suffer.

Despite this great humanitarian efforts by Cubans, they continue to be targeted by the United States for Destruction.

Recently, the Donald Trump government has decided to increase the pressure on Cuba, with the ridiculous

charge of forced labour. It is threatening other countries with sanctions if they accept Cuba's generous offers.

President Trump is pushing what he calls 'Common Sense' international relations.

The US should tell us where is the 'common sense' in trying to destroy Cuba whose policies are founded on solidarity, whose actions save lives and help millions throughout the world.

At the same time where is the 'common sense' in providing Israel with billions of dollars in bombs, bullets, etc to continue its genocide against the almost unarmed Palestinian people. Where is the sense in supporting the Apartheid Israeli regime to grab lands of its neighbours?

All the people in Caricom must raise their voices against the attacks on the Cuban people.

The USA, a country with enormous potential for doing good things, as it is

trying to end the war in Ukraine and its support for Guyana in the face of Venezuela's aggression, has chosen to do its worst, to display the face of the 'Ugly American' in relation to Cuba and its people.

If President Trump is so confident about the US system, then compete on an equal footing with Cuba and see how people around the world would judge the two systems.

Cuba has done more for the poor in its own country and for poor countries than most of the developed countries ever did. If a price tag is put on Cuba's assistance to developing countries it would dwarf those of the developed world.

In conclusion, democratic and peace-loving people everywhere are calling on the USA to take its knee off of Cuba's neck and allow it to breath!

This would be the common-sense thing to do since it would enhance the prestige of the United States!

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"NOT SWEEPING IT UNDER THE CARPET" DR JAGDEO ON GOVT.'S ANTI-CORRUPTION STANCE

"There is no attempt to sweep it under the carpet," declared Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, addressing concerns about corruption within the Guyanese government. Speaking at the Guyana Energy Conference & Supply Chain Expo, Dr. Jagdeo firmly defended the administration's commitment to tackling corruption head-on, emphasising transparency and accountability.

Responding to a question from the audience, Dr. Jagdeo acknowledged that corruption is a global issue, particularly when



Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo being interviewed by Senior Vice President of S&P Global, Ambassador Carlos Pacual during the 2025 Guyana Energy Conference & Supply Chain Expo

large sums of money are involved. However, he stressed that the government is actively working to prevent corruption, not conceal it. "There is no attempt to sweep it under the carpet because corruption is an ugly

phenomenon that occurs everywhere in the world, especially when you're dealing with large sums of money," he stated.

Dr Jagdeo pointed to concrete examples of the government's efforts. He highlighted the National

Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) and its practice of publicly posting contract awards on its website. He contrasted this with the previous administration, which he claimed failed to publish any contract awards during its last five years in office, a violation of the Procurement Act. "We are complying with the Procurement Act. In fact, we're ensuring strict adherence to procurement rules, and we've been vocal about it," Dr. Jagdeo said.

The Vice President also reiterated the government's zero-

tolerance policy towards corruption. He described a recent meeting with public sector accounting officers where he emphasised the importance of adhering to the Procurement Act and Standard Bidding Documents. He warned that officials would be held accountable for any breaches. "We've spoken about instances where engineers may take bribes to approve substandard work, and we've made it clear that these practices won't be tolerated," Dr. Jagdeo added.

Dr. Jagdeo also pointed to international

recognition of Guyana's anti-corruption efforts. He cited the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) Best Regional AML/CFT Case Award (BREMOLT) and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) praise for Guyana's management of its oil wealth and enhanced fiscal transparency in its 2023 Article IV Consultation Report. These accolades, Dr Jagdeo argued, demonstrate the government's genuine commitment to fighting corruption and promoting transparency and integrity in public life.

GUYANA, OTHER NATIONS QUESTION METHODOLOGY USED BY CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) compiled by Transparency International is facing increasing scrutiny, with Guyana and other nations raising concerns about its methodology and validity. These criticisms come as the 2024 CPI results were recently released, prompting debate about how corruption is measured and perceived globally.

Guyana's Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has dismissed the latest CPI report as a "damp squib", accusing local critics of downplaying the country's progress in combating corruption. He pointed to a broader

trend of declining CPI scores in several countries, including the United States, Venezuela, and Canada, questioning the reliability of the index when even nations considered benchmarks for good governance experience significant drops. Jagdeo specifically noted the US' 11-point drop and the 8-point declines for both Venezuela and Canada.

Dr Jagdeo's critique highlights a central issue: whether the CPI accurately reflects on-the-ground realities or is more a measure of perceived corruption, influenced by factors like media narratives and political agendas. He suggested that local groups opposed to the

current government are contributing to negative perceptions of Guyana, impacting its CPI score. He also questioned the comparison of Guyana to other democracies and the integrity of past reports, specifically those related to Guyana's CPI score during the previous administration.

Adding to the debate, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, addressed the limitations of the CPI. She emphasised that it's a perception-based index. "The CPI is not an empirical or scientific measure of corruption levels," Teixeira stated, clarifying that it reflects public perceptions of



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, addressed the limitations of the CPI.

corruption in the public sector, not proven instances of corruption.

Minister Teixeira explained that the CPI aggregates data from various sources, some of which rely on subjective assessments. She highlighted the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, one of the CPI's data sources,

which includes a disclaimer about the subjective nature of its ratings. Regarding Guyana's 2024 CPI score, Minister Teixeira noted the range of scores across different sources, further illustrating the subjective aspect of the index. She also pointed out the influence of external factors, such as media narratives and socio-economic trends, on corruption perceptions.

While acknowledging that corruption is a serious issue, Minister Teixeira argued that non-empirical data should not be the primary measure. She reiterated the government's commitment to tackling corruption through

transparent, evidence-based approaches and suggested that perception-based indices like the CPI cannot be the sole basis for judging progress. She also noted similar concerns about the CPI were raised at a regional anti-corruption conference last year. Minister Teixeira called for a broader understanding of the CPI's methodology and for more empirical approaches to be used in evaluating corruption globally. The criticisms from Guyana, along with similar concerns raised by other nations, underscore the growing debate surrounding the CPI and its role in assessing global corruption levels.

GTI GETS STATE-OF-THE-ART COMPUTER LAB THANKS TO ZARA

Students at the Government Technical Institute (GTI) are now benefiting from a significant tech upgrade, thanks to a generous donation from the Zara Group of Companies. The group recently gifted GTI a state-of-the-art computer lab, further solidifying their commitment to technical education in Guyana.

This substantial contribution provides GTI with 30 fully

equipped computer systems, offering students access to cutting-edge technology crucial for their studies and future careers. The new lab is a valuable addition to the Ken Subraj-Zara Technical Centre, a \$200 million facility commissioned two years ago through a partnership between the Zara Group and the Government of Guyana.

The importance of this tech upgrade was

underscored by Dr. Ritesh Tularam, Deputy Chief Education Officer, who emphasised the crucial role of public-private partnerships in advancing education. He highlighted the Ken Subraj Centre as a prime example of how such collaboration can drive development and provide tangible benefits to students.

Ken Subraj, President of Zara Realty Holding Inc., directly

addressed the students, urging them to embrace the opportunities presented by this new resource. He stressed the importance of personal initiative and the drive to learn, reminding students that education is a pursuit that requires dedication and effort.

Tiffanie Charles-Persaud, Acting Principal of GTI, emphasised the significance of the computer lab in preparing students for



Zara group donates fully equipped computer lab

the demands of Guyana's evolving economy, particularly the rapidly expanding oil and gas sector. She noted that the tech upgrade will equip students with the skills needed to thrive in these

emerging industries and contribute to the nation's prosperity. The lab, she stated, is a vital step in meeting the growing need for a skilled workforce in Guyana.

GOVT REJECTS PROPERTY REVALUATION AND TAX HIKES IN GEORGETOWN, CALLS PLANS 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED'

The government has firmly rejected plans to revalue properties in Georgetown and impose higher taxes, calling the proposals politically driven and aimed at creating dissatisfaction among citizens as Guyana approaches its General and Regional Elections later this year.

The controversy began after City Mayor Alfred Mentore expressed interest in engaging the Ministry of Finance to explore property revaluation in the capital. Mentore argued that this would help fund the city's development, but the government swiftly opposed the idea.

During a recent press briefing, Vice

President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo condemned the push for property revaluation, stating, "Why would you want to do a revaluation of properties in Georgetown, in this year? We have made it very clear that there will be no revaluation of any property, which means higher taxes for people in Georgetown or any other part of the country."

Dr. Jagdeo accused the opposition-controlled City Council of intentionally stirring up unrest ahead of the elections. He argued that the push for revaluation and tax hikes was an attempt to create unease among

citizens, particularly as the nation nears a crucial electoral period. "If they approach the Ministry of Finance for that, the answer will be no," he stated firmly.

The Vice President also voiced concern over the Mayor's other proposals, which include substantial tax increases on religious groups, while the opposition's party, the People's National Congress (PNC), seemingly avoids paying its own significant tax debt exceeding \$6 billion.

In a final warning, Dr. Jagdeo denounced plans for private negotiations between the Mayor and taxpayers over unpaid taxes, calling it a "recipe



Properties in Georgetown

for corruption" and urging citizens to avoid such arrangements.

The government's firm stance underscores

its commitment to protecting citizens from potential financial burdens, especially during an election year, and to ensuring that political motives do not drive decisions that could negatively affect the population.

RAMADAN, A TIME OF MERCY AND JUSTICE, PRESIDENT ALI TELLS GUYANESE AT NATIONAL VILLAGE LAUNCH



Scene from the event

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has called Ramadan a time of mercy, blessings, and justice, emphasizing its role in promoting reflection, empathy, and unity. Speaking at the launch of the National Ramadan Village, he drew from the teachings of the Holy Quran to highlight the values of righteousness and justice during the holy month.

President Ali explained that Ramadan offers a unique opportunity for spiritual reflection, urging individuals to consider

their duty to each other as a community. "We have the ability to be an asset to humanity," he said, noting how fasting helps people experience hunger and thirst, fostering a deeper sense of empathy for those in vulnerable situations.

The National Ramadan Village, located at the Muslim Youth Organisation of Guyana (MYO) in Georgetown, is a collaboration between the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana (CIOG), the Guyana Islamic Trust

(GIT), the Muslim Youth Organisation of Guyana (MYO), and the Government of Guyana. The initiative provides a safe, family-oriented space for Guyanese to gather, reflect, and connect during the holy month.

As one of the five pillars of Islam, Ramadan is observed worldwide through fasting, prayer, and community involvement. In Guyana, the Ramadan Village serves as an important venue for citizens to immerse themselves in the spiritual essence of



Scene from the event

very conflicted and confrontational world what harmony, peace, and living together looks like," he said.

The president also reaffirmed his government's commitment to uplifting people's living standards, ensuring the dignity of the elderly, and safeguarding the future of children.



Scene from the event



Scene from the event

the month. In his remarks, President Ali celebrated the diverse cultural makeup of Guyana, praising the nation's ability to unite different communities. "We are placed here for a specific purpose, and just maybe that purpose is to demonstrate to a



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CRIME PREVENTION TO GET TECH UPGRADE



President Ali along with senior officers of the Guyana Police Force

The government is launching a major technological overhaul of its crime prevention strategy, injecting significant investment into the Guyana Police Force (GPF).

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, speaking at the annual Police Officers' Conference, announced the push for a data-driven

approach, emphasising that **“technology and digital solutions must be the backbone of effective public security systems and policing.”**

The initiative includes a \$250 million investment in specialised training for 1,400 officers in 2024, with plans for an additional 1,700 to receive training later

this year. The focus is on developing scientific crime-fighting methods through data analysis and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI).

A key component of this upgrade is a partnership with the United States to install advanced digitised scanners at all ports of entry, streamlining

immigration and reducing human error. The GPF will also implement a GPS tracking system for its new fleet of vehicles, ensuring accountability and responsiveness. Furthermore, 400 intelligence video camera systems have been deployed nationwide, with 320 more planned for this



President Ali delivering the feature address at the Police Officers' Conference 2025

year. **“This is the type of investment we are making to ensure that our human capability, our human capacity, and our human asset are not only given the capital tools to help them but they're**

given the intellectual capabilities,” President Ali explained.

These technological advancements aim to enhance performance monitoring, accountability, and ultimately, create safer communities.

POLICE TO ESTABLISH OIL & GAS, TOURISM UNITS

The Guyana Police Force (GPF) is expanding its operational capabilities by establishing specialised units to address the unique demands of Guyana's rapidly evolving economy and technological landscape.

Commissioner of Police Clifton Hicken announced the creation of police tourism, oil and gas, aviation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) units at the Annual Officers' Conference.

These new units reflect the GPF's commitment to adapting to the challenges

and opportunities presented by the nation's burgeoning oil and gas sector, growing tourism industry, and the increasing prevalence of AI. **“We are moving to establish a police tourism unit and an oil and gas unit,”** Hicken stated, acknowledging the need for specialised policing in these key economic drivers.

The establishment of an AI unit demonstrates the GPF's proactive approach to leveraging technological advancements for improved policing. These



Commissioner of Police Clifton Hicken delivering remarks

units are part of the GPF's strategic plan for 2022-2026, which focuses on building a resilient

and contemporary police force through strengthened accountability,

innovation, and partnerships. Commissioner Hicken also highlighted

the GPF's commitment to integrity, including the mandatory use of body cameras for officers and the ongoing revision of Standard Operating Procedures.

These strategic developments follow the GPF's reported successes in 2024, including a 12.2 percent reduction in serious crimes and a record number of illegal firearm seizures, showcasing the force's dedication to maintaining security and supporting Guyana's sustainable development.

HUNDREDS OF OFFICERS PROMOTED IN GPF RESTRUCTURING

The Guyana Police Force (GPF) has unveiled a comprehensive promotion list, elevating over 600 officers across both subordinate and senior ranks. The long-awaited announcement, marks a significant milestone for the force, with promotions taking effect from January 1, 2025.

Approved by the Police Service Commission, the promotions encompass a wide range of ranks, from Assistant Superintendent to Senior Superintendent, with several officers ascending to the highly regarded position of Assistant Commissioner.



The promotions encompass a wide range of ranks

Leading the list of promoted officers is Traffic Chief, Mahendra Singh, who has been elevated from Senior

Superintendent to Assistant Commissioner. This promotion highlights Singh's significant contributions

and leadership within the GPF. Other notable promotions to Assistant Commissioner include

D. Moore, K. Mandall, M. Kingston, S. Bacchus, and A. Das. In total, eight Senior Superintendents have been promoted, reflecting the force's commitment to internal development and leadership advancement.

Beyond the senior ranks, numerous Deputy Superintendents, including A. Austin, M. Ally, and R. Ali, as well as Assistant Superintendents like J. Grant and R. Clarke, have also received promotions. The Police Service Commission has further approved promotions for Inspectors and Cadet Officers, ensuring a robust pipeline of future

leaders within the force.

This promotion cycle is particularly significant as senior officers had not been promoted since 2022, creating a considerable gap that had been a source of concern within the GPF. The release of this extensive list has been met with widespread anticipation and is expected to boost morale across the force.

The promotions are seen as a testament to the hard work and dedication of the officers, and a crucial step in strengthening the leadership and effectiveness of the Guyana Police Force.



The new court

MABARUMA GETS NEW \$277.9M MAGISTRATE'S COURT

A new \$277.9 million magistrate's court was officially opened in Mabaruma, marking a significant step forward in improving access to justice for residents of the remote region.

The facility will serve communities across Region One, including White Water and Tobago Hill, and is conveniently located within walking distance of the Mabaruma township.

The commissioning ceremony was attended by Prime Minister, Brigadier

(Ret'd) Mark Phillips, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, Chancellor of the Judiciary (ag), Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, and Chief Justice (ag), Roxane George.

Prime Minister Phillips emphasised the government's commitment to upholding the constitutional rights of all Guyanese. "Today, our government reaffirms our

commitment to these principles by bringing judicial services closer to the people of Region One. No longer should anyone have to endure long, costly journeys to urban centres in search of justice," he stated.

He highlighted the government's holistic approach to development, citing other projects like the ICT Access and E-Services Project and the Solar Home Systems Project, which complement the strengthening of the justice system.

Attorney General Nandlall detailed the government's progress in expanding access to legal services, including the establishment of Deeds and Commercial

Registries offices in Mabaruma and other regions. "Our government plans to ensure that every citizen of our country wheresoever geographically located must, as a matter of right, enjoy equally with his counterparts, wherever they are," he said.

Minister Nandlall emphasised that the new court meets international standards, featuring modern amenities such as audio/visual recording and virtual hearing capabilities. He also noted investments in software for electronic litigation and recent legislative advancements like the Criminal Procedure (Plea Discussion,



Officials at the opening of the new Mabaruma Magistrate's Court

Plea Agreement and Assistance Agreement) Act 2024 and the new Criminal Law Procedure (Paper Committals) Act 2024, designed to streamline the judicial process.

Minister Nandlall stressed the government's dedication to working with the judiciary to provide a

quality justice system for all Guyanese. The ceremony also saw the unveiling of the judiciary's first-ever flag, featuring red, cream, and black bars alongside the image of Lady Justice. The flag symbolises the court's commitment to the rule of law and public trust.

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGE IN TRAINING ON PLEA BARGAINING ACT

A crucial training workshop for legal professionals on Guyana's recently enacted Criminal Procedure (Plea Discussion, Plea Agreement, and Assistance) Act 2024 was held to equip key stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively utilise the new legislation.

The initiative, launched by Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, saw investigators, prosecutors, and other legal professionals



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC

participating in the training session, held at the Cara Lodge Hotel in Georgetown. The focus was on the provisions of the Act, which took effect on January 21, 2025, and introduces significant

changes to criminal justice procedures, most notably the allowance of plea agreements between defendants and state prosecutors before a guilty verdict.

This new Act replaces the previous Criminal Procedure (Plea Bargaining and Plea Agreement) Act and is designed to expedite criminal proceedings and reduce the backlog of cases. A key component of the legislation is the requirement for courts to inform defendants of the option to plea bargain, a measure expected to drastically reduce the number of trials.

The training also included discussions on the upcoming Criminal Law Procedure Paper Committal legislation, which will streamline the process of preliminary inquiries. This legislation, while not yet enacted, further signals Guyana's commitment to modernising its justice system.

Minister Nandlall emphasised the importance of the training in ensuring legal professionals are prepared to implement the new Act effectively. He highlighted that these two pieces of legislation are at the



Stakeholders at the training

forefront of legal reform in the Caribbean. He also noted their alignment with the CCJ Academy of Law's Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform, which outlines measures for improving the efficiency of criminal justice systems throughout the region.

The Attorney General stressed the critical role of investigators and prosecutors in

the plea-bargaining process, particularly at the investigative stage. He noted that they are often the first to recognise the potential for plea agreements, even before a case reaches the court. The training, therefore, plays a vital role in ensuring these professionals can effectively utilise the new legislation from the outset.

GUYANA ESTABLISHES 24/7 RAPID RESPONSE TEAM TO COMBAT CHILD ABUSE

In a move to combat the alarming issue of child abuse, Guyana has established a 24/7 Rapid Response Team (RRT). Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, announced the initiative at a recent engagement at NCN Studios, emphasising the urgency and importance of protecting vulnerable children.

The RRT is scheduled to be launched by mid-April 2025 and will initially be piloted in



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud

Region Four. Recognising the need for immediate

intervention in child abuse cases, the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security has created this team to operate around the clock. This initiative comes after a staggering 4,032 child abuse cases were recorded in 2024, highlighting the critical need for more robust protective measures. Minister Persaud noted that the decision to create the RRT stemmed from the experiences of the ministry's Street Light Project, which

brought to light the vulnerability of children on the streets.

The 24/7 availability of the RRT will allow for quicker responses to reports of abuse, which Minister Persaud emphasised includes not only sexual abuse, but also neglect, physical, and emotional abuse. She identified neglect as the most prevalent form of abuse in Guyana.

Minister Persaud also addressed the ongoing challenge of insufficient staffing

within the Child Care and Protection Agency (CPA). Currently, only 48 officers serve the entire country, a number far too low to effectively address the high volume of cases. To tackle this, the ministry is collaborating with the University of Guyana and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to launch a para-professional social work training programme. This programme aims to train more individuals,

particularly in hinterland communities, to provide essential social work services and eventually pursue further education in the field.

The establishment of the 24/7 RRT and the training programme demonstrate the Guyanese government's commitment to eradicating all forms of child abuse and safeguarding the future of its children.

EXPANDED GUYANA HEALTHCARE INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON ONCOLOGY CARE

A significant focus on oncology care is a key component of the expanded national healthcare initiative in Guyana, announced by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. During the recent sod-turning ceremony for the new \$11.4 billion West Demerara Hospital, President Ali revealed plans for a modern oncology centre, slated to be operational by 2027. This centre will not only provide diagnostic services but also offer crucial treatment options for cancer patients.

This development

underscores the ongoing partnership among the Guyanese government, Mount Sinai Health System, and Hess Corporation, which has been working since 2022 to enhance the nation's healthcare system. The collaboration aims to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare across Guyana, with a particular emphasis on key areas like cardiology and, now prominently, oncology.

"We're not only looking at diagnostics, but building facilities for treatment," President



In 2022, President Ali launched a national healthcare initiative with Mount Sinai and Hess to improve healthcare quality and access

Ali emphasised, highlighting the comprehensive approach to cancer care that the new centre will provide.

The partnership,

which sees joint funding from Hess Corporation and the government, is already yielding results. Beyond the oncology centre, discussions are

underway with Mount Sinai to develop a network of rehabilitation care centre across the country. This initiative aims to optimise hospital bed usage by providing appropriate rehabilitative care for patients who no longer require acute hospitalisation.

The collaboration also includes the development of electronic medical records (EMR) for Guyana's healthcare system, which will improve patient care, safety, and access to health information.

The EMR system will be rolled out initially at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) before being expanded to other healthcare facilities.

Hess Corporation, a leading global independent energy company, recently extended its support for the national healthcare initiative for another three years. Mount Sinai Health System, a major academic medical system in the New York metro area, brings its considerable expertise in healthcare to this important partnership.

MATERNAL DEATHS DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY - HEALTH MINISTER

A significant decline in maternal deaths in Guyana is being highlighted by Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony, who strongly refuted claims of failing maternal care within the healthcare system. During the recent sitting of the National Assembly, Dr. Anthony presented data showing a substantial decrease in maternal mortality, even while acknowledging the tragic loss of three mothers in 2025.

Dr. Anthony explained that while

three maternal deaths have occurred this year, each case was linked to severe underlying health complications, including a ruptured cerebral artery due to eclampsia, cardiogenic shock, and severe anemia. He clarified that eclampsia-related deaths, though rare, can occur despite medical intervention due to the inherent risks associated with high blood pressure during pregnancy. **"This is one of the reasons why mothers would die during pregnancy."**

And there's a 17, 18 per cent chance that this can happen. This is not the system failing. The system has actually improved to respond to these types of emergencies," the minister stated.

The Health Minister emphasised the overall positive trend in maternal health outcomes, citing a considerable reduction in maternal deaths from 23 in 2018 to 14 in 2024. He attributed this progress to ongoing government efforts

to enhance maternal care, which include investments in essential medical equipment, the expansion of operating theatres across the country, and the implementation of training programmes to improve doctors' ability to handle pregnancy-related complications.

Addressing concerns raised by an opposition member regarding the supervision of junior doctors and the alleged loss of senior healthcare professionals, Dr. Anthony dismissed these

claims. He highlighted the significant increase in the number of medical practitioners, from 690 under the previous administration to 1,382 in 2023. He also provided details on the number of obstetrics and gynaecology specialists currently stationed at various hospitals, stating that the system now has more consultants and registrars. Further reinforcing the government's commitment, Dr. Anthony announced plans to add 18 more



Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony

consultants in obstetrics and gynaecology in 2025. **"You tell me how that is bleeding. We have more doctors now in the country and they are providing care,"** the minister stated, directly addressing the opposition's claims.

REGION TWO MOTHERS OVERCOME CHALLENGES, GRADUATE AS HEAVY-DUTY OPERATORS



Kenisha Walcott receiving her certificate

Two young mothers, Latoyah Walcott and Kenisha Walcott, have defied the odds and graduated as certified heavy-duty equipment operators, demonstrating that motherhood and education can go hand-in-hand.

They were among 50 trainees from Region Two who received their

certificates from the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) at the Essequibo Technical Institute.

For Latoyah Walcott, a former school dropout, the graduation marked an unexpected but triumphant moment. Balancing work, a baby, and classes was a challenge, but she told the Department



Latoyah Walcott receiving her certificate

of Public Information (DPI), **"Coming to classes and juggling work and a baby it was tough, but with determination and hard work anything is possible."** The 23-year-old, who proudly declares she **"loves hard work"**, is now looking forward to using her certification to improve her financial

situation and provide a better future for her daughter.

Kenisha Walcott also spoke of the sacrifices required to complete the programme while caring for her two children. **"Being able to wake up from five in the morning to get the kids ready for school then back to training, from training back**

to work, then going home to do it all over again, it was really demanding," she explained to DPI.

Despite the demanding schedule, Kenisha persevered and is now pursuing her dream of becoming a business owner. She credited her success to the support from her community and the government's investment in skills development, echoing the sentiment that **"skills are never too much"**.

Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton delivered the keynote address, reaffirming the government's commitment to supporting Guyanese through

skills development and employment opportunities.

"I preach deliberately saying to young people, you have to be multi-skilled and multi-talented to survive this world that is before you. That is why at the level of BIT we allow for a training that a graduate can do another programme in the Board of Industrial Training," the Minister stated.

The graduating class included fathers, young people, migrants from Venezuela, and other determined mothers, all demonstrating a commitment to personal and professional growth. These graduates contribute to the 1,310 individuals who have graduated from BIT in Region Two over the past four years.

VP JAGDEO CONFIDENT IN GUYANA'S STABILITY AHEAD OF 2025 ELECTIONS, REBUTS EXTERNAL CONCERNS

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has expressed unwavering confidence in Guyana's political stability ahead of the 2025 General and Regional Elections, firmly rejecting international narratives that suggest the country is prone to instability.



Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

Speaking at the 2025 Guyana Energy Conference & Supply Chain Expo, Dr. Jagdeo addressed concerns raised by Ambassador Carlos Pacual, Senior Vice President of S&P Global, who questioned the potential for unrest in the upcoming elections.

"It really irks me that every analysis abroad portrays us as being on the verge of instability – we're not," Dr Jagdeo stated, emphasising that such claims are not reflective of the reality in Guyana. He pointed to the

political maturity and restraint demonstrated by the Guyanese people during the controversial 2020 elections as a testament to the nation's stability.

Despite an attempt by some within the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) to manipulate the results and subvert the democratic process, Jagdeo praised the country's ability to withstand the five-month delay in the release of results without descending into chaos. The prolonged election process was

only resolved after international pressure and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) ruling, with President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali being sworn in on August 2, 2020.

Dr Jagdeo noted that many other countries, particularly those with similar ethnic complexities, might have experienced a crisis in such a situation, but Guyana demonstrated remarkable restraint. **"If we could withstand five months of provocation and delay in a country like ours, with all the complexities, that's something to be proud of. It shows the maturity of our society,"** he said.

The Vice President also highlighted the resilience of the Guyanese people in the face of past challenges,

including economic instability caused by previous administrations and over two decades

Elections Commission (GECOM) preparing for the upcoming vote, the government has

external fears of instability. **"We've achieved significant progress**



General and Regional Elections are due this year

of dictatorship. He stressed that the progress made under the current government has strengthened the nation's unity and stability, positioning Guyana for a successful 2025 election.

With the Guyana

allocated \$7.5 billion to ensure the elections run smoothly. Dr Jagdeo's confidence in the electoral process underscores his belief that Guyana will continue to demonstrate its political maturity and resilience, dispelling

in the last four years, and I'm confident we will emerge victorious in 2025," Dr Jagdeo added, further reinforcing his faith in Guyana's capacity to conduct a transparent, peaceful, and stable election.

DR JAGDEO CALLS OUT SILENCE ON DAVID HINDS' VILE REMARKS AGAINST AFRO-GUYANESE

General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has strongly condemned Working People's Alliance (WPA) Co-leader, David Hinds, for launching what he described as **"disgusting"** and **"insulting"** attacks on Afro-Guyanese.

During his recent 'Politics 101' broadcast, Hinds targeted Afro-Guyanese who support political parties outside his own, calling them **"lick bottoms, house slaves"** and **"sellouts"** for not aligning with his political ideology.

At a press conference at Freedom House, Jagdeo expressed his

outrage, asking, **"Where is the conscience of society?"** He highlighted the stark silence from political leaders, such as People's National Congress/Reform (PNC/R) leader Aubrey Norton and Alliance For Change (AFC) leader Nigel Hughes, who typically voice strong opposition on racism but have failed to speak out against Hinds' offensive remarks.

Dr Jagdeo also pointed to the silence of prominent social organisations, including Transparency Institute Guyana Inc. (TIGI) and Red Thread, questioning why they



General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

have not condemned Hinds' inflammatory language. **"They didn't say a word,"** Dr Jagdeo said, stressing that such attacks on Afro-Guyanese are unacceptable and demand a collective response from society.

The PPP General Secretary, who also

serves as Vice President, refuted the notion that Afro-Guyanese supporting the PPP are **"sellouts."** He emphasised that many of these individuals are simply taking advantage of the opportunities created by the government. Dr Jagdeo noted that the

PPP's political youth arm has registered 1,500 new members, with both young and older Afro-Guyanese joining the party because they believe in making independent, logical decisions for their future.

"The people who are coming to us are smart, ambitious individuals. They can think for themselves and are persuaded by the arguments we present," Dr Jagdeo stated. He pointed out that the opposition coalition has repeatedly proven its lack of vision and incompetence in fulfilling promises, further motivating these

individuals to support the PPP.

Dr. Jagdeo's condemnation was echoed by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Minister Gail Teixeira, and Minister Kwame McCoy, who also criticised Hinds' divisive rhetoric. President Ali additionally questioned the media's silence, calling out a selective approach to condemning racism.

The Association of People of African Descent (APAD) also joined in denouncing Hinds' comments, marking a united front against the WPA leader's controversial remarks.

ONE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE PROMPTS PM MEETING

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips met with One Communications Guyana Deputy CEO Richard Stanton and his team to discuss a recent service disruption affecting some mobile customers. The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's office, addressed the technical

issues that led to the outage.

Stanton explained that the disruption stemmed from a planned technical upgrade and critical system maintenance intended to improve long-term service. While the activities were designed to be seamless, unexpected challenges

arose during the process, resulting in the service interruption. He assured the Prime Minister that technical teams were immediately deployed to resolve the issues.

Prime Minister Phillips, who oversees the Telecommunications sector, acknowledged the need for periodic system upgrades, but

stressed the importance of minimising service disruptions. He emphasised that reliable telecommunications infrastructure is crucial for the well-being

of Guyana's citizens and expects technical challenges to be addressed swiftly.

The Prime Minister's office has advised



General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

affected customers to submit formal complaints to the Public

Utilities Commission (PUC).

1,000 ACRES FOR BEANS CULTIVATION IN BERBICE



Government to support the expansion of red beans and black eyed peas production in the Berbice River

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that the government will bring 1,000 acres of land into production before the end of 2025 to significantly expand the cultivation of red beans and black-eyed peas in the Berbice River region. This initiative aims to provide farmers with an additional income stream and boost national production of these important legumes.

Currently, 77 farmers from Ebini, Kimbia, and surrounding areas are cultivating 663 acres of red beans. President Ali noted that at least 8,000 acres of cultivation are needed to meet the

initial phase of national demand. Each acre is projected to yield approximately 1,600 pounds of red beans, meaning the additional 1,000 acres will produce an extra 1.6 million pounds of red beans and black-eyed peas annually.

“This is adding more income to your community, your pocket and disposable income,” President Ali emphasised during a meeting with farmers and residents of Kimbia Village and nearby communities. He added that the allocated land will also accommodate farmers who have requested additional acreage,

bringing the total to 1,000 acres. He described the expansion as a **“true transformation – moving from zero production in these savannahs to an industry that produces millions of pounds of food annually.”**

Beyond crop cultivation, President Ali encouraged farmers to explore large-scale swine production, pledging government’s support if the community shows interest. This initiative would provide another revenue stream for farmers while contributing to national food security. **“If it is viable and feasible for us to do**

it on a large scale in your communities, the Ministry (of Agriculture) is ready to support that,” he stated.

The President also reiterated the government’s support for cash crop farmers, highlighting the provision of planting materials, fertilisers, seeds, and farming implements. He announced plans to work with cash crop farmers to introduce innovation and technology, including the cultivation of high-value crops like chili peppers using shade-house technology. He also assured farmers that the government will facilitate market

access for their produce, connecting rural production to established supply chains.

The 1,000 acres will complement existing small-scale production and add to the current output. The government is also supporting the construction of a \$1.2 billion silo facility in Kimbia for storing the produced legumes.

President Ali was accompanied by Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, and other ministry officials. Guyana, under President Ali’s leadership, is actively working to position itself as a major food supplier within the Caribbean, contributing to the region’s goal of achieving food self-sufficiency by 2030.

GUYANESE MEDIA PROFESSIONALS EMBARK ON ADVANCED TRAINING IN INDIA

A second group of Guyanese media professionals has departed for India to participate in an intensive two-week training program, aimed at bolstering the nation’s media capabilities. This initiative, a collaborative effort between the Office of the President and the Government of India, signifies a continued push to enhance the skills and knowledge of Guyana’s media workforce.

The programme, building on the success of a previous cohort, is designed to provide participants with advanced training in media and communication. The delegation’s departure underscores the government’s

commitment to fostering a robust and skilled media sector, capable of effectively supporting national development and public information dissemination.

Prior to their departure, the delegation met with Indian High Commissioner to Guyana, HE Dr. Amit Telang, and his team. The High Commissioner reaffirmed India’s dedication to strengthening bilateral cooperation with Guyana through capacity building initiatives. Discussions centered on the importance of the training program and its



Prior to their departure, the delegation met with Indian High Commissioner to Guyana, HE Dr. Amit Telang, and his team

alignment with Guyana’s broader developmental objectives.

Marcia Hope, National Coordinator of the Guyana Media and Communication

Academy and Information Communication Liaison at the Office of the Prime Minister, is leading the delegation. She emphasised the

transformative potential of the training for the local media landscape.

“This training is a crucial step in ensuring our media professionals are equipped with the latest skills to accurately and effectively communicate Guyana’s story with the highest standards,” Hope stated. **“As our nation undergoes significant transformation, a strong media sector is vital for bridging the gap between development and**

public awareness.”

The initiative is part of President Irfaan Ali’s broader strategy to upskill and retrain Guyanese to meet the demands of the nation’s rapidly expanding economy. The government recognises that a highly trained workforce is essential for sustained progress and ensuring citizens can capitalize on emerging opportunities. This investment in human capital spans various sectors, from technical and vocational training to specialised professional development.

NEW GYM, MEAT CENTRE OPEN IN CITRUS GROVE

Citrus Grove, Port Kaituma, Region One has received a significant boost to its community resources with the opening of a new meat centre and

The new meat centre,

funded through the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs’ capital projects budget, is equipped with modern refrigerators and processing machines, promising higher quality meat products for the community.

Adding to the community’s resources, a new gym, located on the first floor of the Citrus Grove Community Centre, was also inaugurated. The gym, outfitted with various training equipment, was funded under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2024.

The \$8.7 million project saw \$6.2 million allocated to completing the upper floor of the community center, while \$2.5 million was used to purchase the gym equipment.

The facilities were officially commissioned by Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, and Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai. Minister Croal praised the Citrus Grove Community Development Council (CDC) for their initiative and encouraged other communities to invest



New meat centre opened in Citrus Grove

in similar projects that promote economic growth and community development. He emphasised the importance of such facilities in the hinterland and urged residents to take care of the new gym.

Minister Sukhai also announced that

a laundromat will be opened in Citrus Grove this year, further expanding services available to residents and visitors. In addition, five 450-gallon water tanks were distributed to the community to improve access to a consistent water supply.



Five 450-gallon water tanks were also distributed to the community

MUSIC STAR SAINT JHN SUPPORTS GUYANA'S CREATIVE SCENE WITH NEW PROGRAMME

Grammy-winning music sensation Saint Jhn, known for his chart-topping hits and distinctive style, has launched the "Develop Home Initiative", a heartfelt programme designed to uplift Guyana's creative community.

Returning to the land of his roots, where he spent formative years, Saint Jhn is leveraging his international platform to empower local artistes.

Driven by a deep connection to his

heritage and a desire to give back, Saint Jhn, whose real name is Carlos St. John, partnered with ExxonMobil Guyana and Creative Titans GY to bring his vision to life. The Develop Home Initiative is not just a fleeting visit; it's a committed effort to create sustainable opportunities for Guyanese creatives.

The initiative's centerpiece event at the Marriott Hotel featured a vibrant networking mixer and an engaging panel discussion. Saint

Jhn, who has navigated the complexities of the global music industry, shared his personal journey and insights with aspiring artistes. He emphasised the importance of cultural exchange, drawing on his own experiences witnessing diverse cultural landscapes, and pledged to bridge the gap between local talent and the international music scene.

Saint Jhn's involvement goes beyond mere appearances. He actively engaged with



Grammy-winning music sensation Saint Jhn addressing the event

panelists and attendees, offering practical advice and encouragement. He recounted his meeting with President Ali, where they discussed strategies to export Guyanese culture, highlighting his commitment to fostering a sustainable creative ecosystem.

His dedication to providing direct access to the music industry was evident as he discussed future community outreach initiatives aimed at connecting young musicians with industry professionals.

Known for his unique blend of genres and his ability to resonate with audiences worldwide, Saint Jhn, has released multiple albums and singles, and his music spans genres like trap and R&B. He has also written songs for prominent artistes such as Kanye West, Usher, and Beyoncé. Beyond music, he has also been involved in modelling and acting.



VP JAGDEO SPEAKS WITH STUDENTS ABOUT OIL, EDUCATION AT ENERGY CONFERENCE FORUM



Vice President Jagdeo answering questions posed by students

Vice President (VP), Dr Bharrat Jagdeo engaged in a wide-ranging discussion with students at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, addressing their questions and concerns about the nation's energy future, educational opportunities, and the government's broader vision for youth development.

The Youth Forum, held at the Marriott

Hotel, provided a platform for students from secondary, tertiary, and technical institutions to interact directly with the VP.

The conversation centred around two key themes: oil and gas and education. Dr Jagdeo discussed the government's approach to oil and gas development, emphasising its potential to drive economic growth while acknowledging

the importance of environmental stewardship. He fielded questions about the environmental impact of oil exploration and production, reiterating the government's commitment to sustainable practices and adherence to the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030. He stressed that oil revenues would not only boost the economy, but also fund crucial investments in other sectors.

Turning to the topic of education, Dr Jagdeo passionately outlined the government's initiatives to empower young Guyanese through access to quality education and skills training. He highlighted the removal of fees from universities and technical institutes,

making higher education more accessible to all. He also showcased programmes like the Guyana Online Academy

equipping young people with the skills they need to thrive in a modern economy. **"There is no restriction**



Scores of youths convened at the Guyana Marriott Hotel to engage Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo on the government's policies in the oil and gas

of Learning (GOAL), the Get Ready for Opportunities to Work (GROW) initiative, the Women's Innovation & Investment Network (WIIN), and the Board of Industrial Training (BIT), all aimed at

on the amount of money we will spend on educating our people," Dr Jagdeo emphasised.

The students' questions reflected a keen interest in the future of Guyana, with many

seeking clarifications on the government's plans for diversification and job creation. Dr Jagdeo assured them that the government is committed to creating a diversified economy and encouraged them to pursue careers in technical fields like engineering, welding, and other support services, highlighting the high demand and earning potential in these areas. The VP emphasised that the government's investments across various sectors would create a multitude of opportunities for young Guyanese.

The forum provided a valuable opportunity for students to voice their concerns and engage in a direct dialogue with the VP on issues that are critical to their future.

HUNDREDS OF GUYANESE COMPANIES GAIN LABOUR LAW INSIGHTS AT MINISTRY SEMINAR

Nearly 300 companies, representing both the private and public sectors, recently participated in a major sensitisation seminar hosted by the Ministry of Labour. The event, held at the Arthur Ching Conference Centre, aimed to educate employers and employees on Guyana's labour laws, workplace health and safety standards, and employee morale.

The seminar proved invaluable for attendees, offering crucial knowledge on various

aspects of Guyanese labour law. Nathaniel Powers, Branch Manager of the newly launched "Boba Fete", emphasised the seminar's impact on his management skills, highlighting the importance of a **"healthy work environment and protecting employees as key assets."** His employee, Shakira Hercules, echoed this sentiment, noting the wealth of information gained about employee rights.

Elaborating on her experience, she



Nearly 300 companies educated on Guyana's labour laws

said, **"Stuff that you didn't know you can gain more knowledge about and you can improve in your working environment...to be very honest, I knew a little and now today,**

I'm here, I learnt so much."

Aldercy Peters praised the initiative for its broad reach, benefiting HR professionals, admin managers, and CEOs alike. She stressed

the importance of understanding labour laws for both employers and employees, ensuring fair practices and legal compliance.

Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton explained that the seminar is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to provide free assistance to workers, disseminate information, and prioritise safety within Guyana's evolving labour landscape. He noted that misinformation regarding labour laws is common, often stemming from trusted

sources, making these educational exercises crucial for both public and private sector entities.

The Ministry of Labour has implemented numerous other initiatives to support employees, including training programmes, a labour app for filing complaints, and various other sensitisation campaigns. This latest seminar underscores the Ministry's commitment to fostering a well-informed and protected workforce in Guyana.

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2025 GUYANA ENERGY CONFERENCE AND SUPPLY CHAIN EXPO

A HUB OF MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR INVESTMENTS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

CON'T FROM PAGE 23



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

sinks. Dr. Jagdeo emphasised the government's commitment to balancing economic growth with environmental protection through the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). Guyana's successful carbon credit sales, including the world's largest carbon deal in 2022 valued at US\$750 million, have been instrumental in supporting climate adaptation and community-driven

Phillips announced a \$794.1 million commitment for renewable energy projects, including new solar mini-grids and hydropower initiatives aimed at bringing clean energy to remote areas.

GUYANA'S AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL TAKES CENTER STAGE

Alongside energy developments, Guyana's agricultural sector was also prominently featured at the GECSCCE. The

both traditional crops and emerging commodities like corn and soya.

Guyana is on track to meet the CARICOM goal of reducing regional food imports by 25% by 2025. With fertile land and a growing agro-processing sector, Guyana is well-positioned to meet both regional and international food demands. Minister Mustapha encouraged investors to explore the country's agricultural opportunities, integral to the government's



The Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain 5K Run 1

energy run/walk and a "Taste of Guyana" event at the Round House, Kingston Seawall, where visitors sampled the country's renowned cuisine. The event, held in collaboration with the

Ministries of Culture, Youth and Sport, and Tourism, Industry and Commerce, offered a unique opportunity to experience Guyana's vibrant food culture.

Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo has cemented the country's position as a regional and global leader in energy, agriculture, and sustainable development.



The Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain 5K Run



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

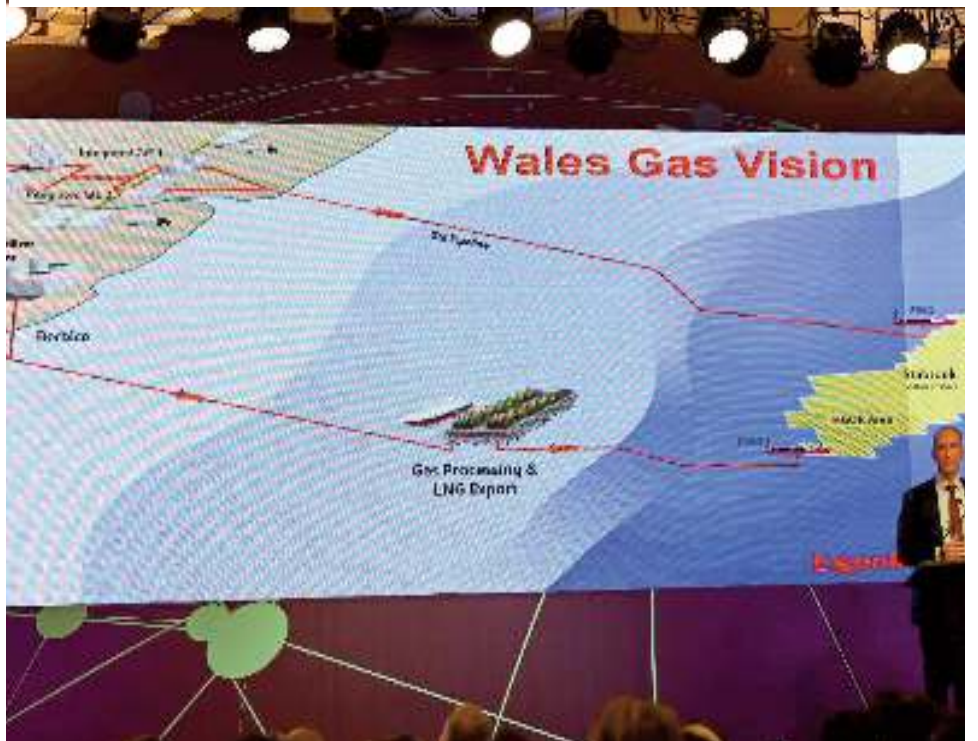
development. The government is also investing heavily in renewable energy, including solar, wind, hydro, and gas-to-energy projects, to diversify its energy mix and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark inaugurated the Conference Village, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, highlighted local agricultural products and investment opportunities. Minister Zulfikar Mustapha showcased Guyana's success in producing

broader economic diversification strategy.

OTHER NEW INITIATIVES AT GECSCCE

This year's conference also introduced new initiatives, including a 5k



The 2025 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo



Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 88

A ROYAL WELCOME GUYANA'S NEWEST HOTEL ADDITION



Guyana's booming tourism, projected to exceed **400,000 visitors** by 2025, welcomes the **Royal International Hotel**. This key addition boasts a 500+ capacity conference hall, state-of-the-art gym, and prime location near Georgetown landmarks, offering a comprehensive experience for business and leisure travellers.





“ I CAN WALK BAREFOOT ON THE BEACH AGAIN!

Local acupuncture clinic is treating the untreatable, peripheral neuropathy with incredible results!

Pain comes in many shapes and sizes. One of the most debilitating being the burning and tingling that comes with peripheral neuropathy. A disease that comes with years of shooting, stabbing pain that gradually ends in numbness, balance problems, and on occasion, amputations. A disease that was once classified as irreparable.

Michael R. of East York was facing such a fate.

“I stopped golfing. I wasn’t taking walks on the beach with my wife. I was living on gabapentin and antidepressants and everywhere I went, my doctor, the specialists, the pain institute, told me there was no cure. How are you supposed to live your life knowing that everyday brings pain and suffering?”

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves, commonly caused by a lack of blood flow to the hands and feet. This causes nerves to begin to degenerate due to a lack of nutrient flow. Most peripheral neuropathy sufferers experience heightened sensitivity to touch making it almost impossible for those diagnosed to even wear shoes, much less enjoy life.

“It was like walking on sharp river rocks. I barely left my recliner,” shares Michael, whose experience is not uncommon for those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy.

That is until he found Teresa Lau of TLC Medicine in Riverdale, Toronto. Teresa and her staff have pioneered a cutting edge, medical solution to treat neuropathy, eliminate or greatly reduce its symptoms and give people their lives back. And they’re doing it without the use of prescription medications and invasive surgeries.

“Acupuncture is incredible at restoring blood flow and stimulating damaged nerves, preventing them from dying off,” tells Teresa Lau. “We take our treatments a step further by integrating ATP Resonance Bio Therapy™ which targets specific nerves in the body using microcurrent. ATP therapy is like watering a plant. This treatment will stimulate the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair.”

Three months later Michael is thrilled with his progress, “I can walk barefoot on the beach again!”

Success stories like Michael’s are not atypical for the staff at TLC Medicine. “We have a 90% success rate at treating neuropathy,” shares Teresa.

The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to fully recover will vary from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. So long as you have not sustained more than 85% nerve damage TLC Medicine offers hope where there once was none.

While Michael’s peripheral neuropathy was idiopathic, meaning the cause is unknown, Teresa’s treatment can also help people whose neuropathy is caused by diabetes or chemotherapy.

“We have seen tremendous success in treating neuropathy of all types through very personalized treatments, specifically tailored to treat each individual case.”

To schedule a consultation and complete evaluation, call (416) 461 - 0581 but do so quickly because TLC Medicine is taking a limited number of new neuropathy patients.

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The Guyana Tourism Authority is issuing an urgent reminder to book tour experiences exclusively with licensed tourism operators when visiting Guyana.

A complete list of officially licensed businesses is available on the Guyana Tourism Authority's Facebook page.

For further inquiries, please contact the Authority via email at info@guyanaturism.com or WhatsApp at +592 638 5128.

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Happy Easter

